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Organizational structures and efficiency of Moroccan professional football clubs

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Abstract:

Regardless of their structure and form (public/private), organizations are often faced with structural choices. These choices can be the result of their history, their activity, the people involved or the strategies pursued. At each stage, managers have to make structural choices that allow them to be in the best possible configuration to be effective.

Therefore, these sports organizations must have a structure that allows them to ensure the best possible coordination between departments. The objective of this paper is to identify structural models and examine the relationship between structure and efficiency in Moroccan soccer clubs. The three organizational design parameters: formalization, centralization, and specialization were examined to determine the structural patterns of Moroccan soccer clubs. The study was carried out with a sample of 15 Moroccan sports clubs. A total of 72 staff members responded to an online survey. The results found show the presence of two structural models: the divisional structure and the functional structure. The MANCOVA procedures showed differences between clubs in terms of sports performance. There is a significant difference between clubs with a functional structure and those with a divisional structure in sports performance, with clubs with a divisional structure generally performing significantly better than those with a functional design because football clubs choose to orient their structure according to the basic criteria of specialization, centralization and formalization.

Keywords: Structure , Effectiveness, Formalization , Centralization, Specialization , Football clubs.

JEL Classification: D23

Article Type: Empirical research

1. Introduction

Among several topics that have attracted the interest of contingency theorists is the analysis of variables related to organizational strategy and structure (Chandler et al. 1962; Burns and Stalker, 1961; Galbraith, 1978; Miles and Snow, 1978; Miller, 1986). The interest in studying organizational structure lies in the relationship between design and other organizational phenomena, such as performance, power distribution, or control systems. Although there is a vast literature on organizational structures that analyzes different types of organizations, few books and publications have been devoted to the specific area of sports organizations. Slack provides the following definition of sport organizations describing their particular nature: "A sports organization is a social entity involved in the sports sector; it is goal-directed, with a consciously structured system of activities and a relatively identifiable boundary" (Slack, 1997).

Although their particularities may be associated with the context in which they operate, this is a broad definition enabling many types of organizations involved in the world of sport to be considered as sports organizations: organizations in the public, private, and voluntary sectors, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, organizations producing sporting goods, developing sporting activities, creating opportunities for sporting competition, broadcasting sporting events, as well as many other organizations related in some way to the sports sector.

Therefore, the first question that arises when studying sports organizations concerns the type of sports organization we are talking about and the different types that can be characterized under this broad concept of sports organizations. The structural characteristics of an organization are usually examined in the context of broader organizational studies. The relationship between organizational structure and organizational performance, effectiveness, control system, adaptability, and member motivation (Hinings et al., 1980), accounts for the common use of other organizational themes in the discussion of organizational structures. Since this relationship characterizes traditional organizational studies, it is likely to characterize research on sports organizations as well. The study of organizational structure is a topic that has concerned many researchers given the fundamental role it plays in organizational development. Within the contingent approach, different types of organizational structures have been associated with different contingent variables, with the terms mechanical or bureaucratic, and organic or adhocratic structures being used (Mintzberg, 1979; Burns and Stalker, 1961). To identify the structure of football clubs, it was required to interview individuals within the department through a quantitative study. Previous literature suggests that top managers better describe values and structural dimensions than other organization members (Glick, Miller, & Huber, 1993; Snow & Hrebiniak, 1980). Therefore, we aimed to collect information from general managers, sub-managers, and department heads. Thus, an online questionnaire was administered and sent to their email address.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: First, we will refer to the theoretical framework. Second, the main methodological issues are presented. Third, the results are presented, followed by a discussion of the results. The last section presents conclusions, theoretical and practical implications, and suggests avenues for future research.

2. Literature review

Several authors (Slack and Parent, 2005; Andrew et al., 2011; Hoye and Smith, 2006) have focused on the theoretical framework within which to situate organizational studies of sports organizations. A number of papers focus specifically on the search for theoretical perspectives within organization theory that might be useful in understanding organizational phenomena in the context of sport. These include papers dealing with bureaucratization processes (Frisby, 1985), rationalization processes (Slack and Hinings, 1987), sociological perspectives (Slack and Kikulis, 1989), institutional perspectives (Kikulis, 2000) determinants of the voluntary

sector (Nichols et al., 2005), agency theory (Mason and Slack, 2001), and the contextualized approach to change (Thibault and Babiak, 2005).

The main theoretical framework within which the debate on the structure of sports organizations is situated is related to theories of organizational change. The process of organizational change is related to a change in the dominant logic that has traditionally determined a certain way of operating in an organizational field (Powell, 1991). In the literature reviewed, this process of organizational change has been experienced as a streamlining process (Westby and Sack, 1976), a bureaucratization process (Slack, 1985), or a professionalization process (Amis et al. 2004). These three "sub-processes" of organizational change are linked to a general process of formalization, the transition from an amateur logic to a more formalized and professional logic. In this context, the debate on the structure of sports organizations focuses on the new forms of integration and differentiation within an organization or network of organizations, which is of particular interest when considering the evolution that sport is undergoing.

To examine the organizational structure of Moroccan soccer clubs, we analyzed three dimensions of organizational structure: specialization, formalization, and centralization. These three dimensions, which originated in the writings of Weber (1947), have been supported theoretically and empirically in organization theory (Millerand Droge, 1986 ; Pugh et al., 1969; Pugh, Hickson, Hinings, and Turner, 1968) and in the sports literature (Kikulis et al., 1995a, 1995b ; Slack and Hinings, 1992 ; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994).

2.1 Specialization

Specialization refers to "the extent to which roles are differentiated according to a particular task or goal" (Kikulis et al., 1995b). Specialization generally refers to organizational differentiation, which is a possible dimension for measuring organizational complexity. This dimension can refer to horizontal differentiation, vertical differentiation or spatial dispersion (Hall, 1973). The first, horizontal differentiation, refers to the way in which the tasks performed are subdivided among its members into routine and uniform tasks (standardization), or the division of tasks according to the degree of specific knowledge required to perform them (specialization). Vertical differentiation is associated with the hierarchical levels of control and decision-making in the organization, and finally, spatial dispersion is related to the spatial distribution of personnel or activities (Hall, 1996).

However, the process of differentiating an organization must be accompanied by a process of integration to coordinate the tasks performed in the organization (Hodge et al., 2003). To achieve this, it is necessary to define control mechanisms, communication channels, and lines of direction that shape each organization's particular way of coordinating and achieving the organization's goals. Sitar et al. (2018) analyzed the contextual structural determinants of individual learning in organizations. Thus, the structuring of individual activities affects learning at work. These authors studied the impact of organizational structure components (formalization, specialization, and standardization) on individual knowledge acquisition or sourcing. According to (Nataša Rupčić, 2018), knowledge acquisition refers to training and obtaining specialized knowledge with immediate relevance to work operations. The existing knowledge of the project could be further supported by introducing information systems as needed.

Vertical differentiation, which is generally associated with the number of hierarchical levels (Kikulis et al., 1989), has been a complex issue in these organizations. The increasing incorporation of professional staff, specifically trained in the field of sports management, has resulted in a loss of control traditionally exercised by volunteer staff in these organizations. The reason for this is the value that the knowledge of sports experts has acquired, which has even led to the possibility of designing dual hierarchical structures (Slack, 1997). Therefore, vertical

differentiation and centralization are complex issues to study in still professionalizing sports organizations.

Differentiation and integration are related to the degree of complexity of the organization: the greater the differentiation, the greater the need for coordination and control, and therefore the more complex the organization. Organizations can have different levels of complexity, which explains the variety of structural compositions that exist. But this phenomenon is not only related to differentiation and integration, it is also associated with the influence of factors such as the external and technological environment that the organization faces, as well as internal characteristics such as the nature of the personnel, traditions and decision-making, among others. This shows that complexity must be studied from a multidimensional approach and not from a priori assumptions such as the traditional relationship between size and complexity (Hall, 1996).

2.2. Formalization

Organizational formalization as a concept has been defined and used quite explicitly. Kim and Beehr (2018) suggested that formalization is measured by the proportion of codified jobs and the range of variation that is tolerated in the rules defining the jobs. The higher the proportion of codified jobs and the lower the range of variation allowed, the more formalized the organization.

The formalization of rules, policies, and procedures contribute to coordination through its control over individuals' discretion and behavior within the organization (Schminke, Ambrose, and Cropanzano, 2000). According to Pugh et al (1968), Schminke et al (2000) a highly formalized organization will have a large number of rules and regulations, as well as comprehensive policies and procedures to guide operations. Thus, formalization will control the contingencies that the organization faces, but the degree of presence and formal definition of norms, rules, policies, and procedures will vary from organization to organization and between different levels of hierarchy within an organization. This will therefore determine the different degrees of complexity of organizations and the various structural forms that may exist. With respect to formalization in sports organizations, most research measures this dimension in terms of the existence and number of norms, rules, policies, and procedures that have a written form in the organization (Slack, 1997).

However, the degree of formalization will be higher in situations where the work performed is of a more repetitive and routine nature, whereas in situations where the work is developed by professionals or experts, the degree of formalization will be lower, precisely because it is performed by people who are specially prepared for it and do not need as many specifications to know what to do. According to Kaufman and Herbert (2018), organizational formalization, centralization, and hierarchy influence perceptions of bureaucracy, but this does not necessarily mean that less formalized organizations are somehow superior. According to the same author, there may be compelling reasons for organizations to be structured in a way that promotes important organizational goals (such as accountability, transparency, or predictability). In sports organizations, it usually happens that a certain degree of formalization is imposed from outside, due to the particularities of the sport, in whose essence norms and rules are found. Therefore, when analyzing the degree of formalization, it is essential to consider the rules, norms, policies and procedures that are imposed from outside the organization.

2.3. Centralization

According to Chelladurai (2001) centralization refers to the fact that major decisions are often made by superiors in high-level positions (centralized decision-making) or are distributed to lower-level positions in the organization (decentralized decision-making). However, excessive formalization and centralization limit managerial decision-making and reduce

managers' ability to respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities (Sandhu and Kulik, 2018). The notion of centralization refers to both participation in decision-making and the hierarchy of authority (Hage and Aiken, 1967). According to Mishra et al. (2018) although authority hierarchy has less predictive power than participation in decision-making as a measure of the degree of centralization, these two indicators are themselves strongly related and provide additional insight into the structural consequences of centralization. Slack and Hinings (1992) also considered the hierarchical level at which the final decision was made. Decisions made by the board of directors indicate a more centralized structure, but when decisions are made by lower-level staff, this indicates a decentralized structure. In non-voluntary sports organizations, the hiring of professional staff has increased levels of specialization and formalization, altering the structural organization (Thibault et al; 1991). Thus, increasing the size of an organization is not necessarily associated with increased decentralization. In voluntary sports organizations, volunteers were reluctant to increase their size in order to maintain control of the organization (Amis and Slack; 1996).

2.4. Structure and efficiency

Atris and Goto (2019) state that "efficiency" is a term that relates the resources used to achieve a goal to the outcomes achieved, provided the process is efficient. This relationship, the author says, is obtained through comparisons, that is, by using variables that measure resources and outcomes in the same units.

As mentioned above, the second intent of this study was to examine the structure-efficiency relationship within football clubs departments. Several authors have associated structure with effectiveness (e.g., Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch) argue that a supportive structure can promote athletic success (Cunningham and Rivera; 2001). Furthermore, attempting to achieve higher levels of performance within the board is related to the perception of a higher quality exchange between leaders, the president, and members. According to Stoyanova and Angelova (2018), the organizational environment externally influences the definition of organizational structure and behavior. However, values, interests, and power have an internal influence, and all have an impact on organizational performance. Papadimitriou (1998) argue that environmental pressures and the organizational network shape the organization, and both are necessary to achieve goals and acquire scarce sources.

In the relationship between structural orientation and effectiveness, the impact of the rational goals quadrant (productivity, planning) appears to be the key to effectiveness (Shilbury and Moore; 2006).

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

In order to ensure an adequate sample size and to maximize the generalizability of the results, clubs playing in the Moroccan soccer championship formed the population base. Second, to ensure a minimum operational structure, only clubs with at least 10 employees were selected. Finally, to explore the relationship between club structure and performance, only clubs that participated in the championship for at least three years were included. Data were collected by mailing a survey to the employees of the 15 clubs.

First, participants were kept anonymous and were assured that there were no right or wrong answers, asking them to be as truthful and honest as possible. This approach was intended to reduce their fear of being evaluated and to prevent them from giving socially desirable or appropriate answers. All participants were informed that we were conducting a study on "the different organizational structures present in soccer clubs".

A total of 123 emails were sent. The participants also received a letter explaining the purpose of the study and the questionnaire. After the first mailing, 15 e-mails were returned, indicating that the address was no longer valid. In addition, 6 people responded indicating that they had left the club. Thus, subtracting the invalid emails and those who indicated that they were not affiliated with the athletic departments, 102 emails were distributed.

A total of 43 people responded to the first mailing. A week later, a second email was sent to participants, and an additional 38 people responded. Thus, 81 individuals chose to participate in the study. Of this sample, however, 9 people checked the "other" box on the questionnaire, indicating that they were not directors in the clubs. Removing these people left 72 participants in the study.

3.2. Measure

The survey included questions to assess the participant's current position in the club (as explained above), the name of the club, and the specialization, formalization, and centralization of the various club departments and services.

Specialization: Based on Pugh et al. (1968), three questions were used to assess department specialization: "The marketing department and the sponsorship department are grouped together in the same department." "There are several levels of management between the operational staff and the management". "Administrators and staff in your department are assigned roles and tasks based on their specific skills." Participants responded to the questions using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

The second component regarding formalization was assessed using five items from Schminke et al. (2000) "The organization has a large number of written rules and policies," "a rules and procedures manual exists and is readily available," "there is a complete written job description for most positions in this department," "the organization keeps a written record of almost everyone's job performance," and "there is a formal orientation for most new department members." Participants responded to the questions using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Centralization was assessed using five items from Schminke et al. (2000): "there is not much to do here until the supervisor makes a decision," "a person who would want to make a decision on his or her own would be quickly discouraged," "even small questions have to go to someone higher up for a definitive answer," "I have to ask the boss before I do almost anything," and "any decision I make has to be approved by my boss." Participants responded to the questions using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

4. Finding

4.1. Descriptive results

The program LISREL v.8 .8 (Joreskog and Sorbom, 2006) was used to check the factor structure of the scales in the study. Satisfactory model fits are indicated by a nonsignificant χ^2 test, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) values less than 0.05 (Steiger, 1990), and comparative fit index (CFI) values greater than or equal to .90 (Bollen, 1989). Values below 0.10 indicate a good fit to the data and values below 0.05 indicate a very good fit to the data (Bentler, 1990). In order to evaluate the parsimonious fit of the model, we used the goodness-of-fit index (James et al., 1982) the closer it is to 1, the simpler the model. A good model was previously reported by Mulaik, in which the PGFI could reach more than 0.5 .

In our survey, we interviewed several employees from each department at each club. Many departments had only one respondent, but several departments had multiple respondents. In the case where multiple participants from the same department responded, their scores were aggregated into a single department score.

To account for this aggregation, we conducted an intra- and inter-analysis (Dansereau and Yammarino, 2000). WABA is used to examine single-level, multiple-level, multiple-variable, and multiple-relationship problems (Dansereau et al., 1984; Dansereau and Yammarino, 2000). For aggregation, WABA is used to determine whether individuals nested within groups should be conceptualized as whole groups (known as homogeneous or whole), or as individuals who are complementary but not similar (known as heterogeneous parts) or as only individuals (known as an equivocal condition) (Dansereau et al., 1984; Klein et al., 1994). This analysis uses ANOVA to demonstrate the existence of similarities or differences between and within groups.

Actually, cluster analysis is considered one of the three most important methods of multivariate analysis, along with principal component analysis and discriminant analysis (Kettenring, 2006).

There are 2 clustering methods, hierarchical clustering and non-hierarchical clustering. Hierarchical clustering is a clustering method that groups n objects into clusters, where the number of clusters that will appear is unknown, so we have to find the optimal number of clusters. And for the non-hierarchical clustering method, it is a method that groups those that are known or predetermined, so in this method the number of clusters can be adjusted according to the researcher. In the present study we took a random sample of club ($n = 15$) and performed a hierarchical cluster analysis to determine the number of clusters present.

4.2 . Results

The RMSEA is 0.029, with values less than 0.05 considered a good fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1992). The normalized fit index (NFI) and relative fit index (RFI) indicate a better fit, with values approaching 1 (Jöreskog et al., 2016), 0.97, and 0.97, respectively, indicating an excellent fit.(Table 1). Incremental fit measures, as well as parsimony measures also indicate a good fit, as the former are all greater than or very close to 0.9, as is the case with the normalized goodness-of-fit index or AGFI [Hair et al. 1999]. According to Hair et al. (1992) reliability is considered acceptable when Cronbach's alpha values exceed the value of 0.7, which proves that in this model, all constructs used achieve adequate reliability values, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 (Table 2).

The WABA results provided general support for aggregation (see Table 2). Indeed, all E-ratios were above the recommended threshold of 1.30 (Dansereau et al., 1984). In addition, all three ANOVA F-values were significant .

Regarding the hierarchical cluster analysis. Examination of the agglomeration coefficients indicated a change of 57.09% which led to a cluster reduction from 3 to 2. Thus Table 3 provides an overview of the results of the two cluster analysis. Cluster 1 is characterized by has high levels of specialization and formalization, but is highly decentralized. The marketing departments in this cluster have been characterized as having a functional structure (Johnson et al., 2005). On the other hand, Group 2 is characterized by lower levels of specialization and formalization, but a more centralized line of authority. Following Mintzberg (1979) the marketing departments in this group have been characterized as having a simple structure. The types of structure are presented in detail in the discussion.

Table 1. Standardized Parameter Estimates for the Three-Factor Model

| Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | R ² |
|--|------|------|------|----------------|
| Marketing and sponsoring services are grouped together in the same department | 0.91 | | . | 0.81 |
| There are several hierarchical levels between operational staff and management | 0.82 | | | 0.66 |
| Administrators and staff in your department are assigned to roles and tasks based on their specific skills | 0.62 | | | 0.36 |
| The club has many written rules and policies | | 0.93 | | 0.81 |
| A procedure manual exists and is accessible to all staff | | 0.95 | | 0.75 |
| Most positions in the department have a well-detailed written job description | | 0.92 | | 0.79 |
| We can't afford to do much until the supervisor makes a decision | | | 0.97 | 0.91 |
| Individual decision-making is often discouraged | | | 0.92 | 0.86 |
| Even the most basic questions must be referred to a superior for a definitive answer | | | 0.62 | 0.36 |
| I have to ask the boss before I do almost anything" and "any decision I make has to be approved by my boss". | | | 0.82 | 0.61 |

Notes : RMSEA = 0,038, (90% CI = 0,024 à 0,053), CFI = 0,986, PNFI=0.862,1=Centralization, 2=Formalization, 3=Specialisation

Source: Author's processing

An ANOVA between subject factors showed that the main effects of Sport [F (2, 1262) = 0.163, p = 0.850] were not significant.

The result of the MANCOVA test of homogeneity of the regression slopes revealed that this hypothesis was respected since the interaction effect between Sport and group was not significant [F (2, 1262) = 0.163, p = 0.850]. MANOVA results on all variables studied showed no difference between the two intervention groups, Wilks Lambda, $\lambda = 0.847$, F (4.94) = 6.141. Although the descriptive analyses showed some differences between the two groups, these were not significant as the results of the ANOVAs (see Table 3) indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in all variables assessed, indicating an adequate level of homogeneity between the two conditions.

The results show statistically significant differences between organizational structures, as departments with an enabling structure scored more points (M = 268.45, SD = 255.18) than those with a simple structure (M = 83.65, SD = 98.93), F(1, 84) = 11.48, p < 0.001, $\eta^2 = 0.12$.

Table 2. Results of the Reliability Estimates

| Variable | α | F | p | E-Ratio |
|----------------|----------|------|------|---------|
| Specialization | 0.86 | 5.61 | 0.01 | 5.92 |
| Formalization | 0.92 | 3.12 | 0.21 | 4.38 |
| Centralization | 0.89 | 2.78 | 0.29 | 3.85 |

Source: Author's processing

Table 3. Structure information for each cluster

| Cluster | <i>Specialization</i> | | <i>Formalization</i> | | <i>Centralization</i> | |
|-----------|-----------------------|------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Cluster 1 | 6.42 | 2.31 | 6.02 | 2.08 | 3.14 | 1.22 |
| Cluster 2 | 6.07 | 2.68 | 5.62 | 2.08 | 5.95 | 2.16 |

Source: Author's processing

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show that soccer club managers choose, based on the main characteristics of their organization, to orient the structure according to the basic criteria of specialization, centralization, and formalization. The results of the CFA indicate that the model fits the data well and that the reliability estimates Cronbach's α are high (all $\alpha > 0.70$). The results of the cluster analysis showed that two distinct clusters emerged to describe the soccer clubs: functional structure and divisional structure.

The club is broken down by major functions, primarily in a horizontal manner, thus promoting specialization (Johnson et al., 2005). In most of the clubs studied, the manager is the sole coordinator of the various functions of the organization. He or she centralizes information and ensures that roles, workflows, and rewards are distributed. This type of structure is possible when the club is small or just starting out (Johnson et al., 2005). However, as the club increases in size, it becomes difficult for the leader to assume the coordinating role alone. The need for change arises, and the executive management team becomes more specialized. The functional structure has the advantage of being a simple, clear and centralized structure. It favors the recognition of functional expertise, even if its capacity to act is limited and depends on the context in which it finds itself. The centralization of information and decision-making leads to a high level of formalization of procedures and to immobility. This high level of formalization, with a view to better coordination, slows down the flow of information. This type of structure is therefore suited to the requirements of a stable environment and to small, uncomplicated clubs. In the divisional structure, employees in lower positions in the hierarchy have the authority to make decisions without the prior consent of those higher in the hierarchy.

There are no real clear objectives, apart from the survival of the organization, the definition of tasks remains unclear, the hierarchy coordinates the whole activity according to feedback but leaves a great deal of autonomy to the units to deal with changes in the environment. This low degree of centralization is accompanied by high levels of specialization and formalization. Management may seek to formalize positions, or workflows, or regulations. They may define that a club's marketing director is responsible for a particular assignment (partners, sponsors, equipment suppliers). It may also state that the CFO is responsible for financial negotiations with the club's partners, not just internal financial management. The purpose of formalizing the position is to delineate the scope of each individual's work to avoid scope creep and conflict between players, which would be counterproductive. Therefore, employees perform specific tasks within the department according to their particular strengths and weaknesses and available resources. Employees in the department have clearly defined roles and expectations and known scopes of work. Employees have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and have a written record of the rules that facilitate the achievement of objectives.

6. Conclusion

Our research questions regarding the effectiveness of a structure is difficult to answer. The results show that there is a significant difference between clubs with a functional structure and those with a divisional structure in terms of sports results, as clubs with a divisional

structure generally performed significantly better than those with a functional structure. This result was expected since the divisional structure favors the specialization of tasks, the formalization of processes, the formalization of results, as well as a clear hierarchical line and a diffusion of information from the decision center to the units, contrary to the functional form where the definition of task remains vague and the hierarchy coordinates all the activity according to the information feedback.

We can conclude that differentiation, formalization and centralization are structural characteristics. However the definition of the structure of an organization is not only determined by the configuration of these elements, but there is also a set of factors that also influence the procedures and operations of the organization. Thus, some authors emphasize the importance of the environment in defining the structure of an organization, either in relation to changes that affect the technology used by the organization (Burns and Stalker, 1961), or in relation to the environmental conditions that the organization faces (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967), or there are those who link the structure of the organization to the goals it pursues (Chandler, 1982). This means that in addition to the elements that make up an organization's structure (differentiation, formalization, and centralization), there are contextual factors, the influence of which also contributes to defining an organization's structure. Future researchers might consider examining the effects of these factors on club structure.

Thus, in this study we have considered the number of wins as some measure of the sporting effectiveness of soccer clubs (Dawson and Dobson;2002), however, we recognize that other measures could very well be incorporated. For example, the points obtained by a team at the end of the season (Barros, Garcia del-Barrio; 2008), the number of spectators (Haas; 2003), duration measured by the number of championship matches played (Audas et al.; 2000). We also believe that the most important direction for future research is to test the relationship between structure and strategy. Indeed, strategy implies structural changes. Either the structure changes to accompany the strategic needs of the organization, or it is doomed to failure, and from this failure arises the need for a new structure to recover. Also it seems interesting to study the impact of the environment on the choice of the structure. This study had a relatively low response rate, limiting the generalizability of the results. Future research may consider a large number of participants.

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