Decision-making processes in football clubs associated with an external advisory programme

Author Details (please list these in the order they should appear in the published article)

Author 1 Name: Benjamin Egli
Department: Institute of Sport Science
University/Institution: University of Bern
Town/City: Berne
State (US only): 
Country: Switzerland

Author 2 Name: Torsten Schlesinger
Department: Institute of Human Movement Science
University/Institution: Chemnitz University of Technology
Town/City: Chemnitz
State (US only): 
Country: Germany

Author 3 Name: Mariëlle Splinter
Department: Institute of Sport Science
University/Institution: University of Bern
Town/City: Berne
State (US only): 
Country: Switzerland

Author 4 Name: Siegfried Nagel
Department: Institute of Sport Science
University/Institution: University of Bern
Town/City: Berne
State (US only): 
Country: Switzerland

NOTE: affiliations should appear as the following: Department (if applicable); Institution; City; State (US only); Country. No further information or detail should be included

Corresponding author: Benjamin Egli
Corresponding Author’s Email: egli.benjamin@football.ch

☐ Please check this box if you do not wish your email address to be published

Acknowledgments (if applicable):

Biographical Details (if applicable):

Benjamin Egli was Researcher at the Institute of Sport Science of the University of Bern and works now for the Swiss Football Association SFA as head of club development. His research focuses mainly on sports organisations and on human resource management in voluntary sports clubs.
Structured Abstract:

**Purpose** – The purpose of this article is to foster a better understanding of how decision-making processes work in sport clubs and to develop appropriate advisory concepts or management tools in order to successfully realize structural changes in sport clubs. This article examines the decision-making processes associated with an external advisory programme. Based on the assumption of bounded rationality, the garbage can model is used to grasp these decision-making processes theoretically and to access them empirically.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Based on a case study framework, an in-depth analysis of the decision-making and implementation processes involved in an advisory programme was performed in ten selected football clubs. Guided interviews were conducted on the basis of the four streams of the garbage can model. The interviews were analysed with qualitative content analysis.

**Findings** – Results show that three types of club can be distinguished in terms of their implementation processes: (1) low implementation of the external input, (2) partial implementation of the external input, and (3) rigorous implementation of the external input. In addition, the analysis shows that the participants in the advisory programme are the key actors in both the decision-making process and the implementation.

**Originality/value** – The paper provides insights into the practicability of advisory programmes for sport clubs and the transfer to the clubs’ practical decision-making routines. Additionally, it shows how sport clubs deal with (external) advisory impulses, and which different decision-making practices underlie these processes.

**Key words**: grassroots sport club, decision-making processes, advisory programme, case study, football, voluntarism

**Article Classification**: Research paper