

Article Title Page

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

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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

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Running Heads: Decision-making processes in football clubs