

The decision-making factor in sports clubs and its role in raising the level of elite sports under sports professionalism

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Abstract:

The study aims to identify the extent to which the decision-making factor in sports clubs contributes and its importance in raising the level of elite sports under sports professionalism. For this purpose, the descriptive method was used on a sample consisting of 10 football technicians and managers, and 18 players. To collect data, a questionnaire tool was used. After gathering the results and processing them statistically, it was concluded that the decision-making factor in clubs plays a role in improving the level of elite sports under professionalism. Moreover, participatory and consultative decision-making produces a positive impact on the club's performance, enhances its value on the football scene, and contributes to the development of football, elevating it to stardom and international recognition. On this basis, the study recommended considering both the positives and negatives of any decision taken, examining all possibilities and potential outcomes, and assessing their suitability.

Keywords: decision-making, sports clubs, elite sports, sports professionalism.

Introduction:

One of the technological features present in all world cultures is the increasing importance of organizations and institutions, and the world of sports is no exception in this regard. The life of an athlete constantly changes as a result of the transformation of organizations and facilities.

Like all other aspects of life, sport requires management, which is considered one of the most important pillars of modern scientific sports development in sports institutions. Effective management plays a key role in enhancing athletic achievement and improving both its quantity and quality. Among these sports is football, which is one of the most popular sports worldwide, strongly attracting young people to practice it. It is well known that administrative decision-making constitutes the core of the administrative process itself, being involved in all management functions, from defining the objectives of the work within an association or club, to selecting staff, and directing tasks. All these functions require appropriate and positive administrative decisions. Thus, decision-making is the true measure of administrators' leadership capacity and the ability of managers to lead and provide direction (Souhib, 2011, p. 64).

The reality is that administrative decision-making is the essential process and the main function carried out by managers in different types of sports institutions. It consumes most of their time and energy, as it is a dynamic, continuous, and interconnected process. It involves multiple interactions across its various stages, beginning with the design stage and ending with the follow-up stage of decision implementation, while continuing until the objectives are fully achieved.

In this regard, through our study, we attempt to highlight the extent of the contribution of the administrative decision-making factor adopted by managers to elite sports (high-level sports) within professional football teams. This does not imply that our work provides the ultimate solution, but rather it represents a starting point for more precise scientific research in this field, and a step toward drawing attention to this important aspect. On this basis, we present to the reader a modest attempt in this vast and rich area, which may serve as an invitation to pay greater attention to it.

Sport plays an important role in the lives of entire nations, being regarded as a form of education and morality before it is simply a practice. In the present era, the progress and development of nations are measured by the progress and development of sport itself. However, sport cannot effectively fulfill its role without administrative leadership that organizes and manages it. The rapid development that sport is currently experiencing has increased its need for sound and timely decisions, as well as dynamic strategies capable of addressing challenges. This requires individuals with competence and the ability to make the right decisions in the process of development (Souhib, 2011, p. 58).

The research addresses a new scientific endeavor in the management of Algerian sports clubs, which is not an easy task but requires great research effort. However, these difficulties do not prevent us from presenting, analyzing, and providing a general critique that helps to understand the organizational problems faced by sports clubs. Many individuals lack the organizational vision and the intellectual and scientific imagination in management. In other words, they manage as if management were only about handling individuals. This is due to the lack of distinction between leadership as an organizational structure and decision-making as a behavior and a dynamic of influence that allows for introducing or implementing organizational change without strong resistance from club members.

Understanding the foundations of decision-making, ensuring its orientations, and reducing uncertainties require broad support from the public. Yet, management allows for taking appropriate decisions and actions to maintain stability and achieve the objectives and successes for which it was established. Management itself is considered a science because it has its branches, domains, and specializations. Likewise, decision-making is a form of purposeful discretionary behavior, since it is also directed toward predefined goals, seeking to find appropriate solutions to the problems that sports institutions face in achieving their objectives. It is essentially a human process, based on human behavior, and its efficiency largely depends on the competence and quality of that behavior and of the key decision-makers.

Accordingly, this study was undertaken to highlight the decision-making factor in sports clubs. To address the general problem, we have posed the following main question:

To what extent does the decision-making factor in sports clubs contribute, and does it play a role in raising the level of elite sports under professionalism in Algeria?

To answer this question, we formulated the following sub-questions:

- Are there standards adopted by managers in making the right decisions?
- Does participatory and consultative decision-making contribute to raising the level of elite sports?

Research Hypotheses:

- **Main hypothesis:**

The decision-making factor in sports clubs contributes to raising the level of elite sports under professionalism.

- **Sub-hypotheses:**

a. Sports managers rely on practical standards and foundations when making decisions in sports clubs.

b. Participatory and consultative decision-making contributes to raising the level of elite sports.

Research Objectives:

- To highlight the role of administrative decision-making in sports clubs and its contribution to raising the level of elite sports (high-level sports).
- To clarify the relationship between the decision-making process in clubs and its positive impact on raising the level of elite sports.
- To attempt to reach objective results that may open new horizons for success in sports clubs and facilities.
- To provide methodological and practical guidelines that can be enriched and raise awareness about the decision-making process in sports clubs and sports institutions.

Operational Definition of Research Terms:

1. **Decision**

- *Terminologically:* It is a daily and recurring action that expresses the processes of natural human thinking, serving as the starting point toward achieving goals and succeeding in them (Dawaf, 1992, p. 75).

- *Operationally:* It is the act of doing a specific thing before doing something else, and this decision may lead either to the success or failure of the institution.

2. **Decision-Making**

- *Terminologically:* It is a means used by management to enable it to perform functions related to directing the activities entrusted to it (Nasrallah, 2000, p. 102).

- *Operationally:* It is an objective daily activity that seeks to choose the best alternatives among individuals without direct state intervention, with the sports club being the main activity.

3. **Sports Club**

- *Terminologically:* It is a civil association formed by a group of individuals on their own initiative without direct state intervention. The association aims to invest its members' leisure time through sports activity as a main activity, as well as political or social activities as complementary ones (Ameen, 2002, p. 89).

- *Operationally:* It is an association formed by a group of individuals without direct state intervention, and its purpose is focused on sports activity.

4. **Professionalism**

- *Terminologically:* It is the practice of a person's activity as a profession, carried out regularly and continuously with the aim of achieving financial income that can be relied upon as a means of living (Kamal, 2006, p. 4).

- *Operationally*: It is a characteristic of a person who practices a profession with high efficiency.

5. Elite Sport

- *Terminologically*: Also referred to as high-level sport, elite athletes are those who have achieved sports performances at an international or world-class level (Abdel Azim, 2005, p. 142).
- *Operationally*: It refers to a group of athletes and players of a high level with great professionalism.

Previous Studies and Similar Research:

1. **Study by Nouman Abdel Ghani** titled *“Decision-Making in the Sports Field and Its Relationship with Informatics: A Scientific Sports Article”*.

- **Objective**: To show that decision-making is a dynamic process, requiring constant monitoring and follow-up of results to make adjustments as needed.
- **Methodology**: A field study using the descriptive method, with questionnaires as a data collection tool.
- **Findings**:
 - There is a correlation between the information system and decision-making regarding results recorded during the sports season.
 - Making a decision, even if it involves some mistakes, is better than not making a decision at all.
 - Decision-makers must monitor and follow up on the outcomes of their decisions and adjust them as necessary.
 - Participatory and consultative decision-making has a positive impact. The process of decision-making originates from collecting, analyzing, and processing information in a practical way that leads to identifying possible alternatives for solutions.

2. **Study by A. M. D. Uday Ghanem Mahmoud Al-Kawaz and Bilal Souhib Abdul Karim** titled *“A Comparative Study of Decision-Making Between Sports Coaches and Their Managers at the University of Mosul”* (College of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Mosul, 2011).

- **Objective**: To identify the decision-making skills of sports coaches and their managers at the University of Mosul, and to examine the differences between them.
- **Methodology**: Descriptive method with a sample of 15 sports coaches and 18 managers across 18 colleges in the 2009–2010 academic year. Data was analyzed statistically using percentages and the Chi-square test.
- **Findings**:
 - Both coaches and managers possessed good decision-making abilities.
 - Significant differences were found in decision-making skills between coaches and managers, in favor of managers.

3. **Study by Dr. A. Haitham Abdullah Soon** titled *“The Phenomenon of Indecision Among Decision-Makers and Its Impact on Sports Administrative and Educational Work”* (College of Physical Education, University of Baghdad, 2001).

- **Objective**: To diagnose the administrative competence of staff in institutions and to identify the variation in the effect of external factors on administrators’ decision-making in sports institutions.

○ **Findings:**

- Administrators must fully bear responsibility without hesitation.
- Administrative expertise and competence play a crucial role in positive decision-making to achieve goals.
- Unilateral decisions should be transformed into collective decisions.
- Separation between decision-makers and executors negatively impacts workflow and results stemming from decision implementation.

Research Methodology and Field Procedures

Research Method:

The researchers adopted the descriptive method, given its suitability to the nature of this study.

Population and Sample:

The original population of the study consisted of 14 sports managers and technicians (male) and 26 football players. The research sample included 18 players and 10 managers, selected randomly from the football team *Association Sportive Olympique de Chlef (ASO)*.

Research Tools:

• **Sources for Collecting Theoretical Material:**

After gathering information and ideas and analyzing the data carefully, we selected what was most relevant to the subject in order to cover all its aspects and provide the scientific material for the theoretical framework. The sources included scientific books and journals, graduation dissertations for Bachelor's, Master's, and Magister's degrees, as well as doctoral theses.

• **Sources for Collecting Field Data:**

Data collection was based on the responses of sample members to a questionnaire consisting of questions divided into themes related to the proposed hypotheses. The questionnaire included closed, semi-closed, and open-ended questions. Closed questions restricted the respondent to choosing one answer by marking (×) in the appropriate box, while open-ended questions gave respondents the freedom to express themselves. All questions were designed by us and revised by academic referees.

Pilot Study:

Before distributing the final questionnaire to the sample, we conducted a preliminary trial to become familiar with the research field, which was the professional football club *ASO Chlef*. We presented the research topic to them and obtained information and statistics about the club's managers and players targeted by the study. Then, we distributed preliminary questionnaires to the managers and players. By reviewing the responses, we identified unclear questions, removed one question, and reformulated the others clearly. This led to the design of the final version of the questionnaire for distribution to the research sample.

Scientific Foundations of the Tests:

• **Reliability of the Questionnaire:**

To measure the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used. Questionnaires were distributed and collected, then redistributed to the same group outside the research sample. Reliability is achieved when the instrument provides consistent results if administered again under the same conditions. The questionnaires were distributed to a group of 4 managers and 8 football players not included in the study sample. After one week, the questionnaires were redistributed to the same group, and the data was collected. Statistical analysis was performed using *SPSS*, and Pearson's simple correlation coefficient was applied at a significance level of

0.05. The obtained correlation coefficient was positive with a high degree of reliability ($r = 0.6319$).

- **Validity of the Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in the field of physical education and sports, specifically 5 professors from the Institute of Physical Education and Sports at the University of Chlef. Based on their observations, modifications were made. The first section included questions formulated on indicators reflecting the standards adopted by managers in decision-making, while the second section included questions formulated on indicators showing the extent of the impact of participatory and consultative decision-making on elite sports. All questions were revised except question 1, ensuring the scientific accuracy of the instrument. Thus, the questionnaire was deemed valid for use in the final application of the research.

- **Objectivity of the Questionnaire:**

The objectivity of the questionnaire lies in its relevance to the research objectives. This was ensured through extensive reviews of similar studies on decision-making in sports clubs and its role in raising the level of elite sports under professionalism, and by having the questionnaire reviewed by professors from the Institute of Physical Education and Sports at the University of Chlef, particularly academic referees, with impartiality and avoidance of bias.

Statistical Study:

The researchers analyzed the results using the statistical software *SPSS*, applying the following equations:

Chi-Square Test "K²":

Calculated $K^2 = \sum (D - E)^2 / E$

Where:

- $\sum (D - E)^2$: is the sum of the squared differences between the observed frequency and the expected frequency.
- **D**: represents the observed frequency.
- **E**: represents the expected frequency.

(Source: Atiya, 2001, p. 391)

Correlation Coefficient (R):

$$R = \frac{N \cdot \text{Sam}(X.Y) - \text{Sam } X - \text{Sam } Y}{(N \cdot \text{Sam}^2 X - \text{Sam } X^2) \cdot (N \cdot \text{Sam}^2 Y - \text{Sam } Y^2)}$$

Sam X: Sum of values for the variable "x"

Sam Y: Sum of values for the variable "y"

Sam X²: sum of the squares of the values of the variable "x."

Sam Y²: sum of the squares of the values of the variable "y."

N: Number of sample members

Sam (X.Y): Product of the corresponding test scores

Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

Presentation and Analysis of the Questionnaire Axes:

Axis One: The reliance of the sports manager on scientific standards and principles in decision-making within sports clubs.

Question 1: *Does each person bear responsibility for the decision they make in the club?*
(Addressed to managers).

Responses	Frequency	Calculated K^2	Tabular K^2	Statistical Significance:	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom
yes	13	8.33	5.99	Statistically Significant	0,05	02
No	00					
Sometimes	05					
Total	18					

Table (01) shows the managers' responses to the first question.

From the results presented in the table above, it is clear that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the higher value at the significance level (0.05) with degrees of freedom (02). The calculated Chi-Square value ($K^2 = 8.33$) is greater than the tabular value ($K^2 = 5.99$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, which states that there are differences among the players' responses regarding decision-making and the extent to which each person assumes responsibility for decision-making within the club.

Question 2: *What is your opinion about the decisions made by the managers in the club?*
(Addressed to players).

Responses	Frequency	Calculated K^2	Tabular K^2	Statistical Significance:	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom
Sufficient	04	13	5.99	Statistically Significant	0,05	02
Insufficient	11					
Somehow	03					
Total	18					

Table (02) presents the players' responses to the second question.

From the results shown in the table above, it is evident that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the higher value at the significance level (0.05) with degrees of freedom (02). The calculated Chi-Square value ($K^2 = 13$) is greater than the tabular value ($K^2 = 5.99$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, which states that there are differences among the players' responses regarding whether decision-making in the club is sufficient or insufficient. The null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that, according to the players, the decisions made in the club are **insufficient**.

6-1-2 Axis Two: Participatory and consultative decision-making contributes to raising the level of elite sports.

Question 1: *Does your participation in decision-making contribute to raising the level of elite sports?* (Addressed to players).

Responses	Frequency	Calculated K^2	Tabular K^2	Statistical Significance:	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom
yes	14	16.33	5.99	Statistically Significant	0,05	02
No	03					
Sometimes	01					
Total	18					

Table (03) presents the players' responses to the first question.

From the results shown in the table above, it appears that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the higher value at the significance level (0.05) with degrees of freedom (02). The calculated Chi-Square value ($K^2 = 16.33$) is greater than the tabular value ($K^2 = 5.99$).

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, which states that there are differences in the players' responses regarding their participation in administrative decision-making and its contribution to raising the level of elite sports.

Question 2: *In your opinion, does choosing the appropriate alternative contribute to raising the level of elite sports?* (Addressed to managers).

Responses	Frequency	Calculated K^2	Tabular K^2	Statistical Significance:	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom
yes	15	21	3.841	Statistically Significant	0,05	02
No	00					
Sometimes	03					
Total	18					

Table (04) presents the managers' responses to the third question.

From the results shown in the table above, it is evident that there are statistically significant differences in favor of the higher value at the significance level (0.05) with degrees of freedom (02). The calculated Chi-Square value ($K^2 = 21$) is greater than the tabular value ($K^2 = 5.99$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis can be accepted, which states that there are differences in the respondents' answers regarding decision-making and that selecting the appropriate alternative contributes to raising the level of elite sports. The null hypothesis is thus rejected, meaning that choosing the appropriate alternative **does contribute** to improving the level of elite sports.

Discussion of Results and Comparison with the Hypotheses:

Discussion of Results and Comparison with the First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states: *"The sports manager relies on scientific standards and principles in decision-making within sports clubs."*

From the results obtained and as shown in Tables (01) and (02), it is clear that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between identifying and selecting the appropriate alternative. Once the problem becomes clear, it is natural to search for solutions that contribute to resolving it effectively, and to choose the best alternative one that has many advantages and few disadvantages in order to reach a sound decision.

This finding is consistent with Dr. Haitham Abdallah Hassoun's study, which confirmed that the inability to identify and select the appropriate alternative, or the manager's failure to evaluate alternatives, results in the phenomenon of *hesitation*. After determining the alternatives, it is essential to evaluate them, as the evaluation process is a step in decision-making that highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative, as well as the material and human resources required for implementation and the time needed. This facilitates comparison between two or more alternatives. Accordingly, we conclude that the first hypothesis has been confirmed.

Discussion of the General Hypothesis:

The general hypothesis states: *"The decision-making factor in sports clubs contributes to raising the level of elite sports under professionalism."*

Through the discussion of the results obtained in relation to the partial hypotheses, and by confirming their validity and consistency with the main studies that supported our research problem, it becomes evident that the decision-making factor in sports clubs does indeed contribute to raising the level of elite sports under professionalism. This can be attributed to the

method followed by the researchers, which led to these outcomes. Accordingly, we can conclude that the general hypothesis has been confirmed.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Based on this study, the researchers reached the following main conclusions:

- Identifying the decision-making factor in sports clubs and its role in raising the level of elite sports under professionalism.
- Relying on a scientific approach in administrative decision-making has a positive impact on raising the level of elite sports.
- The participation of players in decision-making contributes to strengthening group cohesion, which in turn helps in raising the level of elite sports.
- Decision-making through participation and consultation produces a positive effect on the club's performance and enhances its value in the football arena.
- The decision-making factor in clubs is considered a crucial and fundamental element that helps the club overcome difficulties and find appropriate solutions to raise the level of high-performance sports.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

- When making a decision, alternatives must be prepared and the most appropriate one should be chosen in terms of feasibility of implementation.
- Time is one of the most important elements in decision-making.
- Understanding the facts is essential, as the lack of information may lead to an incorrect decision.
- Administrative decisions should not be improvised or biased.
- Decisions must be preceded by planning and organization so that they are appropriate for the problem at hand.
- It is important to consider the positives and negatives of any decision, examine all possibilities and potential outcomes, and evaluate their suitability.
- Situations should be confronted and matters resolved through well-studied and impactful decisions, implemented without hesitation, in a way that serves the institution in achieving its goals.

Conclusion:

Decision-making is the core of leadership, whether political or administrative, and it represents the starting point for all procedures, activities, and behaviors within an organization, as well as in its interaction with the external environment. The concept of decision-making has received exceptional importance across various administrative fields and activities, as it fundamentally contributes to enabling the organization to continue its organizational and administrative functions efficiently and effectively.

Through our study, it became clear that the field of sports is one of the areas that requires managers with rational and conscious administration, capable of making sound decisions aimed at improving sports performance in their organizations. This responsibility lies with managers, coaches, and those entrusted with duties that require competence, skill, and experience in making crucial and sound decisions. Their tasks include preparing and forming teams, selecting the most suitable players, and coordinating their work with coaches, executive board members, general assembly members, and the athletes themselves. In light of these tasks, managers must follow a precise and effective system in decision-making, facing obstacles such as hesitation or

haste, in order to plan properly and make administrative decisions that serve the goals of sports and contribute to improving and raising the level of elite sports under professionalism.

On this basis, one undeniable truth emerges: the success of an administrator in their functional performance is always measured by their ability, potential, and excellence in making positive and effective decisions. Decision-making is inherently connected to all elements of the administrative process. By relying on a scientific approach in making the appropriate decision, and steering away from crisis management, managers can ensure that sound decision-making becomes the lifeline and driving force of management, as well as the foundation upon which the administration of professional clubs is built.

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