

## **HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLYMPIC SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS**

**Tripolitsioti Alexandra, Ph.D**

Peleponnese University, Department of Sport Management, Orthias Artemidos & Plateon,  
23100, Sparta, Laconia, Greece,

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**ABSTRACT:** *The International Olympic committee, the national Olympic committees, the national sports federations and sports development in the selected places consist of the Olympic sports organizations. All these sports bodies must be managed in order to fulfill their roles. The purpose of this study was to review the published knowledge about the human resource management characteristics of these sports organizations. After the thorough and exhaustive review of the international literature and the content analysis of the most important articles, the following was found: The management of human resources of the Olympic sports organizations has a number of particular characteristics. They have very few staff members, the human resources are volunteers and few of them are paid. So, in order to organize the human resources management of these sports bodies in a better way, they should develop a human resource strategy, to recruit and motivate human resources, to develop human resources through training and to develop skills for managing the human resources. It is concluded that all of these competencies are needed for the efficient administration of an Olympic sports organization and they are essentials for it to meet their objectives and fulfill its role.*

**KEY WORDS:** Olympic Sports Organizations, Human Resource Management, Strategic Human Resource Management

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the last thirty years, there have been significant changes in the sports organization, which from amateurs became more businesslike. This progress requires a better management system for their administration. The Globalization, bureaucratization, commercialization, technology, and changes in public funding affected these changes.

Mega sporting events played a significant role in the economic activities, and an increase in tourism in the international, national and domestic places. These positive economic benefits have increased the participation in many sports of the general populations which thus contribute to the better image of the community (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson and Stewart, 2015; Hanlon and Cuskelly, 2002 Pitts and Stotlar, 1997).

A resource in its organizational framework is defined as "anything that can be considered as a firm's strength or weakness", including tangible and intangible assets. There are three key organizational resources: the human resources, financial resources, and technological resources. The term "management of human resources" has been extensively examined and its philosophy and character has been the focus of the ongoing discussion and there is no widely accepted definition (Wernerfelt, 1984).

The purpose of human capital management is to ensure that an organization's employees are used in such a way that the employer derives the maximum benefit from his or her abilities and for the employees to obtain material and psychological benefits from their work (Graham, 1978).

Storey (1995) believes that human capital management is a separate approach to the process of organizing employment that seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the development of a highly dedicated and skilled workforce using a range of cultural, structural and technical staff.

Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) point out that human capital management is a management perspective that supports the need to create a comprehensive set of staff policies to support organizational strategy.

Bratton and Gold (2007) argue that human management is a strategic approach to managing employment relationships, which emphasizes that harnessing the potential of people is vital to achieving a competitive advantage by achieving this through a separate A set of integrated policies, programs, and employment practices.

Although there is no agreement between the academics and practitioners on the characteristics of human resource management, it is concluded that HRM is a combination of the managerial practices that are man-based that regard workers as assets rather than costs. Thus, the main objective of the HRM is to create and maintain a skilled and dedicated workforce to gain a competitive advantage (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014a).

It should be stressed here that the different views and differences in the interpretation of the HRM created two different schools of thought: the soft and hard HRM. The soft focus focuses on training, development, commitment and employee involvement. It is used to define the human resources functions and to develop the incentives, quality, and commitment of the employees. The crew on the other hand, focuses mainly on the strategy where human resources are used to achieve organizational goals. It is also associated with the cost and capital control strategies, especially in the business processes such as size reduction, wage reduction, reduction of comfort breaks, etc. (Armstrong, 2006; Beardwell and Claydon, 2007; Beardwell, 200; Storey, 2001).

## **METHODS**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the published knowledge of the specificities of human capital management in the Olympic and sports organizations. For this purpose, a specific methodology was followed, which included the design of the review of the work and its implementation.

Initially, the databases, journals, textbooks, conference proceedings, chapters in books, and other academic projects searched for were identified. The data were collected using the standard random sampling method and represented all areas of human resource management in sports. The key words used were: "human capital management in sport", "strategic human capital management in sport", "current problems in human capital management in sport", "management of human capital in Olympic sports organizations", "current management

problems of Human capital in the Olympic and sports organizations "and" Strategic management of human capital in the Olympic and sports organizations "(Kabitsis, 2004).

Before the information was gathered for evaluation, two criteria were set: (a) the publication of the proceedings was carried out in the last decade, and (b) the language of the published information is English. The data were critically analyzed according to the keywords. Therefore, the information studied was related to the management of human resource management in the Olympic sports organizations.

### **HRM in General Business and Sports**

Many of the key concepts of the economy and human resources management that applies to all the organizations are either in the business world, such as Mercedes and Heineken or in the sports world such as New Balance, Nike or Olympiacos. This is not surprising, as all these organizations employ staffs who are expected to perform a series of defined tasks at an appropriate level of performance. This staff will manage the funding, strategically design and produce products (cars, beers, shoes, programs, and championships). However, there are significant differences between businesses, Olympic and the sports organizations, which have resulted in the changes of the general human capital management practices (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson and Stewart, 2015; Senyuçel, 2015; Walsh, Sturman and Longstreet, 2010).

In particular, the professional sports societies have special features that present a unique challenge to human resource management. The management of human resources in the case of the Olympic sports club "Olympiakos" includes three different types of employees. Athletic Professional Club "Olympiakos" employs senior sports executives (business development manager, sales manager, marketing manager). It also employs mid-line executives in the football section (physical education teachers, coaches, physiotherapists). It also employs people made up of the "team", the players (Olympiakos.org, 2017). It could be argued that other non-sporting companies and organizations operate in the same way, with different levels of management, from the CEO to the factory worker. What makes the big difference in the sporting context is that the human resources at the bottom of the pyramid are the highest employees throughout the organization. It should be noted that sports organizations have employees who could be considered to be paid at low wages "the lowest wage", but in relation to non-sports organizations, they are not equivalent (Hanlon and Jago, 2011; Robinson, 2004).

In Mercedes and Heineken, but also in other positions, CEOs, and other senior executives often receive bonuses and have access to share options that allow them to share the wealth they produce. The producers, however, do not have access to the performance programs and bonuses that may be worth millions of dollars. Attributable to the professional sports organizations, performance bonuses are available to the players or athletes because they are the ones who produce the product.

In addition, a significant proportion of staff in the semi-professional and non-profit sports organizations are volunteers. The distinction between the volunteers and the paid staff in the effective management of these groups is a challenge for the management of human resources in these athletic organizations, which are organized in the whole of the national culture, for the sophistication of complexity and diversity (Chelladurai and Mandella, 2006; Mulin, 1996).

## **Approach to Olympic Sports Organizations**

The main purpose of the Olympic sports organizations is to promote Olympism. This can be by the term of global sport organizational structure that have five general assembly authorities which are: (1) to promote sport; (2) to develop the values and standard of sport; (3) to admit and approve in the standard of competition system, sports equipment, and sports personnel; (4) to control and provide supervision and also give reward or a penalty suspend and (5) incorporate with other public sector sports organizations (Jackson, 2010). The structure of the sports organizations refers to the global networks that are relevant and connect with the public sports sector in other continents and nations. The International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.), SportAccord (previously known as G.A.I.S.F., the General Association of International Sports Federations), International Paralympic Committee (I.P.C.), International Sports Federations (IFs), International World Games Association (I.W.G.A), The Association Of International Sport for All (T.A.F.I.S.A.), International University Sport Federation (F.I.S.U.) are the supreme authorities of the word sport organizations. In the continental level, including Olympic Council of Asia (O.C.A.), European, Olympic Committees (E.O.C.), Pan American Sports Organization (P.A.S.O.), Oceania National Olympic Committees (O.N.O.C.), Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (A.N.O.C.A.) and Continental Single Sports Organization. For the national level, the national sports organizations have a government that varies in each country and the private sector of the international sports organization are included in the National Olympic Committee (N.O.C.), the National Sports Association or National Sports Federation (N.F.s) and the National Paralympic Committee (N.P.C.). There are currently 204 NOCs over five continents. In the structure of a sporting competition, single sports event and multi-sport event are the two basic competing systems that are related and consistent with the sports organization in the global (international), continental and national level (Research report, 2015; International Olympic Committee, 2014; 2015;16; Sports federation, The General Secretariat of Sports, 2017).

## **Challenges of HRM in Olympic Sports Organizations**

The research studies in sport literature suggest that the Olympic sports organizations are relatively immature in the development of human resource management strategy, but are becoming more 'professional' in the way they approach the people's management issues (Amis, Slack and Hinings, 2004a; Amis, Slack and Hinings, 2004b; Chelladurai, 1999).

In the current literature, there are reviews and research studies that investigated the human resource management in the sports organizations.

Doherty (1998) examined the organizational behavior in sport, by using a conceptual model of the relationships among the work environment factors and concluded that the contribution of human resources in the management of sports organizations is not known and there is relatively little information. The same opinion was expressed by Chelladurai (1998), who supported that the systematic research on how employing the duality of human capital plays out in terms of human resource management is scarce. The author confirms the topic of organizational justice and its importance to the HRM policies. The authors provided a customized approach for the OSOs' HRM practices in terms of staffing, employee assessment, pay and reward systems, training, empowerment, and conflict management (Chelladurai, Szyszlo, and Haggerty, 1987; Doherty, 1998; Chelladurai, 1999; Chelladurai, 2006).

It is well accepted and recognized that human resources are essential for the proper function of a sports organization and are needed to obtain other resources such as money. In other words, HRM is the way to use the members of an organization to achieve their goals, since HRM is a component of general management (Harel and Tzafrir, 1999; Hoye, Smith, Nicholson and Stewart, 2015)

However, the management of human resources of the Olympic sports organizations has a number of particular characteristics that are: (a) have very few staff members (table 1.), (b) the HR are volunteers and (c) few of them are paid (Camy, Robinson, Chelladurai and Leroux, 2006).

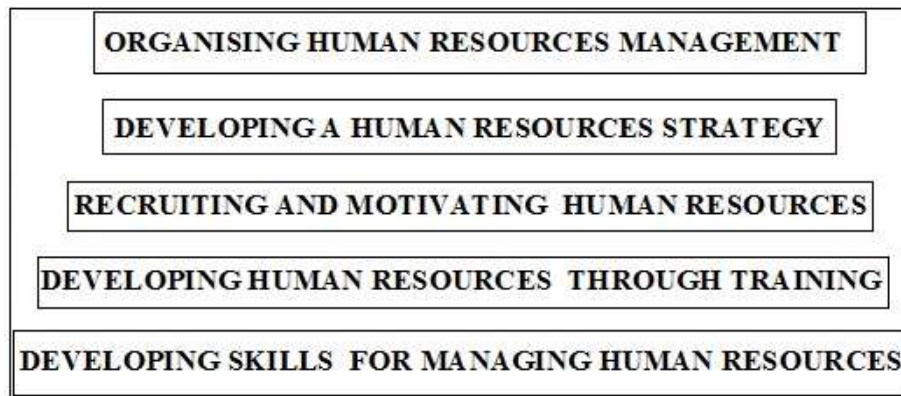
**Table 1. Classification of Olympic organizations, according to staff numbers. (Modified from Camy, Robinson, Chelladurai and Leroux, 2006).**

<b>Olympic organization</b>	<b>&lt;5</b>	<b>6-20</b>	<b>21-50</b>	<b>&gt;50</b>	<b>Total</b>
Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa	7	10	1	2	20
European Olympic Committees	3	14	9	8	34
Olympic Council of Asia	2	7	8	4	21
Pan American Sports Organization	9	10	2	4	25
Oceania National Olympic Committees	3	1	1	0	5
<b>Total</b>	24	42	21	18	105

One of the most commonly used dimensions in an organizational structure is the formalization. Formalization is used to organize human resources management, such as the volunteers, elected and salaried staff in the Olympic sports organizations and it includes the rules and regulations of those operators. The formalization includes the remuneration conditions, the hierarchical and operational relationships, the individual positions and responsibilities, the relationship between the organization and its members and finally the hours of work. For paid employees, this usually involves an employment contract, which outlines the agreement made by two signing parties (Bratton and Gold, 2007; Slack, 1997; Smith, 2004).

The same procedure is followed for the volunteer positions. In the document, the agreement outlines the responsible authority within the Olympic organization, the length of nature and of the assignment, and the resources that will be allocated, such as equipment, premises, personnel, allowances, and funds. The procedures for the elected members are the same, except they fall into the control of the ruling authorities, such as the General Assembly or the Executive Committee. Formalization of responsibilities and positions, includes the detailed job descriptions separately for each position within the Olympic organization. The hierarchical and operational relationships of the Olympic organization include the detailed duties of its members for every position and usually can be formalized in a staff handbook. Most of the Olympic organizations formalize the working hours of their paid workers. Conversely, they do not use this formalization for the volunteers or elected. Another significant part of the management of

human resources in the Olympic organizations is the balance between the remuneration and member's contribution since it has not been able to function for a long time and if there is a general feeling of inequity between its members. So, there is a descriptive plan that contributes to the efficient function of the Olympic organization members to be paid (Clark, 2005; Cuskelly, Hoye and Auld, 2006; Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2008).



**Table 2. A specific model of HRM in the Olympic sports organizations (Modified from Camy, Robinson, Chelladurai and Leroux, 2006).**

An Olympic sports organization in order to manage its human resources in a long-term process needs to have an HRM strategy that will ensure that these activities can achieve its objectives. First Human Resources of the Olympic sports organization should be analyzed. This action should include a SWOT analysis of human resources by addressing the main areas of activity that comprise HRM regarding the recruitment practices, working conditions, remuneration, evaluation of staff skill levels and other relating matters. The major weaknesses found in the SWOT analysis, would determine the objectives of the Olympic sports organization and mainly those that contribute to its operation. In these, should be included a recruitment of an information and communication technologies, a rule setting for career development, that monthly staff meetings have an agenda, a framework, a building for yearly performance-review interviews and a training in an information and communication technologies over the next 4 years in order to implement a computerized process into the administration of the Olympic sports organization (Capeli, 2001; Chelladurai, 2006; Chelladurai and Haggerty, 1991; Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2008; Jackson, 2010; Walsh, Sturman, and Longstreet, 2010).

After the objective definitions, an action plan should be implemented. The content of this plan should involve, for example, a recruiting campaign for volunteers and develop new salary scales within the Olympic organization, training managers in the time management skills, and carrying all needed planning of actions in order to achieve the whole objective (Chelladurai, 2006; Jackson, 2010).

Recruitment is the process of getting people with exactly the attitudes, skills and qualities for which they are looking. These practices are different between Olympic organizations and dependent of the employees they are needed: The volunteer technical staff, salaried administrative employees or volunteer senior management. If the 'wrong' people are recruited,

it could affect their goals. Before the recruitment processes, it is necessary to carry out an evaluation of the needs of the Olympic organizations. So, a guide of the current staff and the future needs that they fall within the strategic plan organization is listed (Beardwell and Claydon, 2010; Capelli, 2001; Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2011).

Since it is difficult for an Olympic organization to use an optimal recruitment in selecting employees, they usually practice it by selecting one of the following three options: (a) to recruit someone from outside the organization, (b) to fill the position with someone from within the organization and (c) to decide that filling the vacancy is not justified and reorganize instead (Camy, Robinson, Chelladurai and Leroux, 2006).

The recruitment procedures include briefly: the needs identification of the Olympic organization, the determination of the procedures to be intended, the candidates incitement, the candidates, evaluation and choice, the contract formalization and hire and integrate (Aisbett and Hoye 2015; Selemani, et al., 2014).

Training is a significant HRM process for the members of an Olympic organization and it is conducted in order to help them to acquire the competencies they need to cover in the organization day-to-day activities and its defined strategic outcome. Training may be preferred for functional reasons or for ethical reasons (Dessler, 2008; Storey, 2001).

The first step is an evaluation of the needs of the Olympic organization and its human resources, as well as the level of competencies demanded of its members. The second step is relating to a training plan prepared to identify the needs in order of priority and according to a schedule. The third step implements the required training and monitors its success, and the fourth stage evaluates the training that has been carried out and its effects on the individuals and the organization. Training needs to be evaluated by a performance analysis that can show if the Olympic organization fulfills its mission and objectives and determine the areas of weaknesses. A questionnaire can be used to analyze any problems that arise and then to suggest an analogous training program (Chelladurai and Mandella, 2006; Geet, Deshpande, 2009).

After the evaluation of the training needs of the Olympic organization, the training procedures should be selected. These are the informal training and formal training. Informal training is a process which is conducted without specialized personnel and is supported only by practical experience, while there is no need to use a formalized plan. The formal training is executed with the support of a specialized professional as part of an analogous preparing program (Weerakoon, 2016; Aisbett and Hoye, 2015).

In addition to the general training processes, the training elements are further enhanced. A framework for a training plan is designed to include the objectives, the population to be trained, the choice of the teaching methods and resources and at the end the assessment conditions. This training plan should be designed in such a way as to ensure that all the relevant personnel of the Olympic athletic organization are trained.

Evaluation of training is a basic part of this process because it confirms what has been conducted or determines where corrections are necessary. Evaluations may be made via or subjective factors or objective factors and includes: (a) Skill building, (b) acquired skills and knowledge and (c) impact on the Olympic athletic organization's operations (Chelladurai, 2006; Chelladurai and Mandella, 2006).

An Olympic athletic organization needs management competencies in order to make its human resources more effective and of high-level. These will help the Olympic athletic organization to organize, plan, motivate, recruit and develop their members as paid staff and volunteers. So, specific human resource management competencies such as managing time, decision making, communicating, problem-solving, and managing conflict should be developed (Sienkiewicz, 2014).

Decision making is one of the significant competencies in the human resource management process of an Olympic athletic organization. Many times the decisions to be made are difficult, while some of them are not known for their outcomes.

There are cases in which, although there are many chooses, the result of a decision is not known. Thus, in order to reduce, a possible risk from a wrong decision, specific criteria and information should be considered. Especially when the significant resources are involved, a rational decision must be taken. Paton (1995), proposed the following steps: analyze the situation, state goals, identify possible options, derive criteria for choosing amongst options, obtain information on consequent of options, assess options against criteria and choose the best option.

The Paton's approach outlined in the previous paragraph will help an Olympic sports organization to solve its problems and become effective. When something is not done properly by volunteers or by the paid employees, a problem may arise, but this can be solved if you are properly treated, not taking into account only the symptoms but the problem itself (Paton, 1995). The next step to be taken is a clear decision, which must be communicated to all concerned, and then it must be checked that the problem has been solved (Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2011).

The communication is a high-level human resource management competency that increases effectiveness. The paid staff and volunteers who work for the employers make fewer errors, thus reducing costs. The result of greater motivation, fewer mistakes and involvement is better service to stakeholders (Rapilla, 2008).

A specific human resource management competency in an Olympic organization is the managing time. It seems that if time is not managed properly, there is a possible risk that the work cannot be completed. Thus, it needs specializations in time management in order to manage the Olympic athletic organization's human resources efficiently (Bloisi, 2007).

The activities in which time can be lost are poor communication, lack of preparation, taking work home after a full day, procrastination, poor delegation, poor prioritization, confusing what is urgent with what is important, and lengthy phone calls, meetings or conversations. After taking into account these activities a time management strategy is planned and over time this strategy will work best for the Olympic organization (Geet, Deshpande and Deshpande, 2009; Walsh, Sturman and Longstreet, 2010).

The conflict management between the teams and individuals is a part of an Olympic organization and could be constructive or destructive. After considering the issues and deciding to be intervened, a strategy that involves the following is needed: 1. Identifying the problem, 2. Examining the relationships that the protagonists have within the organization, 3. Identifying the problems and the costs of the behavior, 4. Approaching those involved in the



conflict: Work together to search for a solution and 5. Implementing the solution and then evaluating the situation.

All of these competencies are needed for the efficient administration of an Olympic sport organization and they are essentials for it to meet their objectives and fulfill its role (Unlue, Serarslan, Yamaner and Sahin, 2012a; Wittcock et al, 1996).

## CONCLUSION

By exploring aspects of human resource management in the Olympic athletic sports organizations, the sports managers can learn ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their activities. It may also influence the human resource strategy, to recruit and motivate human resources, to develop human resources through training and to develop skills for managing human resources. Increased competition, globalization and constant changes in the market and technology have highlighted the need to review the management of the organization and human resources in order to overcome the major challenges. Therefore, the managers should use SHRM to overcome the important issues and shape well-designed strategies so that the organization succeeds. Thus, the formal implementation of SHRM and well-designed practices can lead to effective and effective actions. However, misapplication of this practice may also lead to reduced performance of the organization.

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