

Professionalization of Burkinabe Football: Analysis of a Global Problem and Elements of Organizational Methodology

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Abstract: *The sports sector has become a major economic field. This fact forces sports structures to be more professional, thus moving away from the amateurism and ideals of Pierre de Coubertin. Burkinabè football and its clubs find it difficult to follow this logic of professionalization, a factor that promotes performance. The general objective of this research is on the one hand, to analyze the organizational device of the football clubs of first division of Burkina Faso in their dynamics of professionalization by making an inventory of the difficulties inherent in this device; on the other hand to show the advantages of the sports society in an approach to solving these difficulties. Our results show that all of the clubs have administrative, legal, financial, infrastructural and logistical shortcomings, which are inherent in the associative status of these structures. Also, in a logic of professionalization, the stakeholders interviewed are part of the perspective of a sports society with better supervision of its operation with regard to its strengths.*

Keywords: Professionalization, Football, Sports Association, Sports Society, Organization

1. Introduction

Today, sport has become a social, complex and far-reaching phenomenon. It has all the influences of our century. Organized activity, it uses like any other especially on the economic level, the most modern management tools: taxation, finance, human resources and infrastructure management, legal services, project management, marketing, communication, image rights, communication relations management, etc. He also knows an evolution which results from very close interactions between his practice and the other fields of the human, political, ideological, social and cultural activity, due to the strong implication of the political actors in the sport system in all the countries and especially in developing ones (Dakpo, 2003).

Of all the sports, football, commonly known as the “king sport”, is undoubtedly the one that is best known and even the most practiced throughout the world. Therefore, it constitutes, a social specificity which generates a strong economic power. This state of affairs obliges it to be part of a dynamic of performance and professionalization to meet today the sporting requirements while moving away from the ideals amateurs once advocated by Pierre de Coubertin.

To this end, sports associations, and especially those of football, are gradually trying to differentiate themselves from their associative status as provided for by the law of 1901. Indeed, the evolution of the overall socioeconomic context, the process of innovation scientific, information

(training) with an entrepreneurial and technological spirit are recurrent issues at the foundations of the achievement of any sports performance which oblige sports actors to seek other transversal sources of funding (Abalot et al., 2017).

Burkina Faso, like some African countries, has difficulties to illustrate in this area because, as a post-colonial French-speaking society, the legacy of the past deeply influenced its political functioning characterized by very public management centralized. Sport has not escaped this legacy and its current administration depends mainly on the supervision of the Ministry of Sports and the National Olympic Committees (Bouchet, Kaach, 2004). Also, the transposition of a “westernized” performance-oriented sports model is not adapted to the economic, cultural and social characteristics of developing countries and has led to the establishment of empty structures that do not allow development sport as a whole (Chifflet and Gouda, 1992).

Thus, Burkina Faso adopted its first national sports policy in September 2007, the main objective of which was to make this sector a tool for social and economic development, a means of international influence and a factor for strengthening cooperation with other nations (PNS, 2007). The second national policy saw the light of day ten years later that is to say in November 2017 and aims in part at social well-being, national cohesion.... We thus note a change in the initial objective. Despite these policies, Burkinabè football clubs, basic units and starting links in the development of the sports movement, are experiencing organizational difficulties which we postulate that they

impact their performance and therefore the quality of production of the sports spectacle.

Our question relates to the establishment of football sports companies in Burkina Faso which seems to offer clubs the possibility of becoming part of a dynamic of professionalization. Indeed, we understand the professionalization of sports organizations as a process of rationalization of associative sports activities, that is the way in which collective actions are structured with a view to the production of sports activities (Chantelat, 2001). This process includes the rationalization of training techniques, the transformation of a free activity into a paid activity, the institutional structuring of a profession and the rationalization of organizational functioning (Koski and Heikkala, 1998). Rationalization can be observed on three dimensions which are: the professionalization of actors, activities and structures. The latter requires a reorganization of associations on a model similar to that of the company (Falcoz and Walter, 2009). In Burkina Faso, the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES), policy and development benchmark, aims, by 2020, to make the sport sector an economic tool through the sports industries (sports equipment, sports equipment, media etc...).

The purpose of this research is to analyze the organizational system of the clubs of the first division of Burkina Faso with a view to professionalization. In terms of a specific objective, it is a question of identifying the organizational difficulties of football clubs and of demonstrating the advantages of the sports society as an element of organizational methodology enabling these difficulties to be resolved.

This research is part of a managerial approach by focusing on the "overall management of the organization through a set of production policies for goods and services, communication, marketing, human resources, financing policy, budgetary control" (Bayle, 2007). For this, the insight into the theory of organizational efficiency of Herman and Rentz (2004) served as a theoretical framework.

2. Methodology

It is a qualitative and quantitative prospective research. To better understand the parameters of the study, the actors involved in the practice, organization and development of Burkinabé football are targeted at different levels: the players of the first division clubs (D1), the coaches of these clubs, their leaders, members of the Burkina Faso Football Federation (FBF) and certain officials of the Ministry in charge of sports in Burkina-Faso. First, the choice of players and coaches is justified by the fact that they live the reality of clubs and therefore constitute actors likely to bring substance to our study. Then, the presence of club leaders, members of the federation as well as certain officials of the Ministry in charge of sports in the study population is explained by their administrative functions or elected representative, their experiences, but also their knowledge of this sport discipline. In principle, any definition of vision or strategies in the field of football is primarily a matter of their fields of action and their skills.

The non-random sampling method was used for this study. The reasoned choice technique was used for club and FBF leaders. Also, you had to be an elected member or permanent staff and have a minimum of three years seniority in office. As for the executives of the Ministry in charge of sports, these are those who occupy technical management positions in connection with sports structures. For technical managers (coaches) and players, the accident sampling technique was used. A total of 202 people made up our sample (see Table 1)

Table 1: Distribution of the sample

	Survey sample	Number of people
1	Players	111
2	Coaches D1, Sports directors	34
3	Club leaders	41
4	Federalmembers	8
5	MSL frames	8
	Total	202

Source: Survey results (2018)

To collect the data, we used two techniques: the questionnaire and interview survey and the corresponding tools, a questionnaire and an interview guide. These two tools were also pre-tested with a very small number of the study population. This preliminary measure made it possible to identify shortcomings and imperfections which were taken into account in the development of the final tools. Two questionnaires were designed as part of this study. One is for D1 club leaders and the other is for coaches and players from those clubs. The interview guide was administered to federal members and officials of the ministry responsible for sports.

Data collection from players and coaches took place on the training grounds just before or after the sessions. Club leaders were interviewed by appointment at their convenience. As for the interviews with the members of the federation and the executives of the ministry in charge of sports, the appointments were made by telephone and made according to the availability of the interviewee and in a place chosen by the latter.

The data from the questionnaire was the subject of a statistical analysis. To do this, Microsoft Excel 2010 software was used to build a database. The data was processed by IBM SPSS23.0 software. The data collected by interview were transcribed to constitute "verbatim" and were subject to thematic content analysis related to the research objectives. This methodology allowed us to obtain the results presented in the following section.

3. Results

Our results will be presented and analyzed along two main lines, namely the organization and operation of clubs and the establishment of sports companies.

3.1 Organization and operation of clubs

Figures 1, 2 and 3 and then Tables 2 and 3 show the results concerning the organization and operation of the clubs. These results show the organizational difficulties

encountered by D1 football clubs in Burkina Faso. These difficulties will be addressed by adapting the application of the theory of organizational effectiveness of non-profit associations of Hernman and Renz (2004) to our results.

Weak human resources

Club leaders claim to have a seat (75.6%), an email address (73.2%), a permanent secretariat (73.2%), a permanent administrative secretary (34.1%), a landline phone (24.4%), a permanent financier (24.4%), a permanent secretary (17.1%), a website (12.2%) and a permanent communications and marketing officer (0%). Referring to these results, it can be seen that the clubs have little seat, permanent staff and not even a seat communication manager

at all when they are necessary for the production of performance on all levels. As a result, one interviewee stated that: "Nowadays, in a club, the management does not exist and that which exists does not provide the necessary steering. It is common to see a president play all the roles". Thus, a problem of human resources and governance arises. Indeed, with the increase in competitive pressure in many sports fields as well as the transformations of sport supply and demand, sports organizations rely primarily on administrative frameworks. These results therefore reflect the amateur nature of these clubs through the glaring lack of permanent staff. The results of this study are similar to those of Falcoz and Walter (2009).

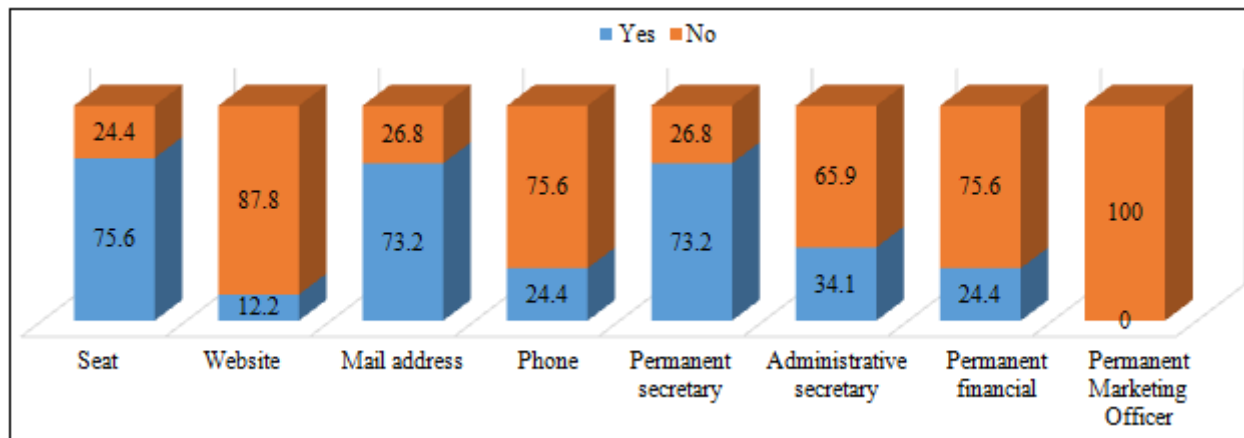


Figure 1: Status of permanent administrative staff

Non-compliance with the legal framework and poorly participative governance

Table 2: Existence and compliance with the Statutes and Internal Regulations

N°	Variables	Terms				Total
		Yes		No		
		Effective	(%)	Effective	(%)	
1	Clubs with Statutes and Internal Rules	40	97,6	1	2,4	41
2	Clubs respecting the Statutes and Internal Regulations	21	51,2	20	48,8	41

In Table 2, 97.6% of those surveyed say that their club has statutes and rules of procedure. These data show that most of these sports structures have a legal basis of existence. However, 48.8% of those surveyed say that their club's statutes and internal regulations are not respected. Thus almost half of the clubs do not respect the basic texts governing them, a sign of dysfunction which can undermine the club's objectives in terms of performance. In addition, we note that almost all the clubs are governed by a trio limited to the president, secretary and treasurer, while the other existing members are not consulted for decision-making. As a result, there is a management and governance problem that can be described as Top Down. We also note the non-application of existing texts. In addition, we note the non-holding of statutory meetings as well as the absence of monitoring-control of these structures by higher authorities such as the Leagues, the Federation and the Ministry in charge of sports. The result is a governance problem.

The method of financing so-called traditional clubs: the State, then the patrons

With regard to graph 3 below, we can see that the contributions of the ministry in charge of sports and the FBF constitute the first source of funding for D1 clubs (68.3%) followed respectively by that of private individuals (24, 4%), then membership fees (4.9%) and finally sponsors (2.4%).

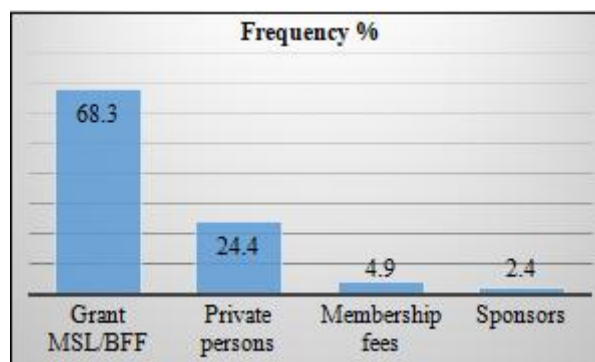


Figure 2: Sources of club funding

There is an insufficient diversity of sources of funding which, in the context of Burkina-Faso, makes depended mainly on state clubs and patrons, and for a very small part on sponsors and membership fees. It emerges from our interviews that if the clubs of Burkina-Faso have long been funded by patrons and sponsors, this fact tends to become rare these days. Thus, a respondent affirms: "We come to a

club as a manager either out of passion or to provide resources. Nowadays, we have neither. They come to clubs to take advantage of the benefits of their function. ” The interviews also reveal that the subsidies from the Ministry in charge of sports and the Federation in charge of football are currently the main sources of funding for clubs. The latter therefore remain very dependent on political and federal choices and on what is considered to be a little "transparent" management of resources considered to be weak. According to one interviewee, "the other concern that clubs face is the management of their scarce resources. Transparency and probity are not the most cultivated values in the financial management of clubs of Burkina-Faso".

This dominant mode of financing, State and patronage), is said to be ordinary or traditional. Our results thus confirm those from the work of several authors including Tado (2016), Fall (2008) and Hounkpè (2008) carried out respectively in Senegal, Benin and Cameroon. In addition, in the macroscopic sense, Gouda and Kpazaï (2012), based on the models of analysis of sports results in relation to sport and socioeconomic parameters, have shown that the development of performance sport is necessarily based on development global and harmonious, that is to say an economic, scientific and technological development. In addition, their study reveals that non-sporting elements participate in the development of sport by providing the necessary material, financial and human bases. Even if the study focused on sport in Benin in general, it is the result of grassroots structures that is to say of the clubs, the subject of our study. Also, beyond Benin: "African countries in general face problems with the development of physical and sports activities. Despite the means implemented by governments to get them out of this delay since independence, the results seem to be long overdue. The case of Beninese, Congolese, Nigerien and Senegalese sports (studied) shows that there are many problems to be resolved: relations between the State and sports organizations, financing, infrastructure and equipment, training of managers and definition of a coherent sports policy and management "(Gouda, 2010).

From the provision of quality sports equipment to the technical organization of clubs

Table 3: Training conditions and presence of an equipment supplier

N°	Variables	Terms				Total
		Yes		No		
		Effectives	(%)	Effectives	(%)	
1	Existence of training grounds	123	84,8	22	15,2	145
2	Existence of training grounds	62	42.8	83	57,2	145
3	Better training conditions	60	41.4	85	58.6	145
4	Existence of an equipment supplier	68	46,9	77	53,1	145

Table 3 highlights the lack of quality infrastructure. Indeed, it emerges from the survey that a majority of respondents, 57.2% indicate that their training grounds are not of good quality. In addition, 58.6% of the players and supervisors surveyed believe that the training conditions are not satisfactory. The dissatisfaction with these working conditions could be explained by the lack of quality equipment and the condition of the training grounds. The infrastructural conditions are a determining factor for performance in sport in general and in football in particular. In this sense, Akouété (2012) in defining sports equipment as a space or building fitted out and dedicated to the practice, underlines that the development of sports is strongly conditioned by the financing of sports equipment. In addition, the real development of competitive sports requires good construction and operation of sports infrastructure. Also, our results overlap with those of Fall (2008) who conducted a study carried out in Senegal on the factors limiting the performance of clubs in competitions. The author concludes that the poor performance of Senegalese football clubs at the African level is due, among other things, to a lack of organization in terms of teaching materials (in the training of players, coaches and managers) and a lack of quality infrastructure.

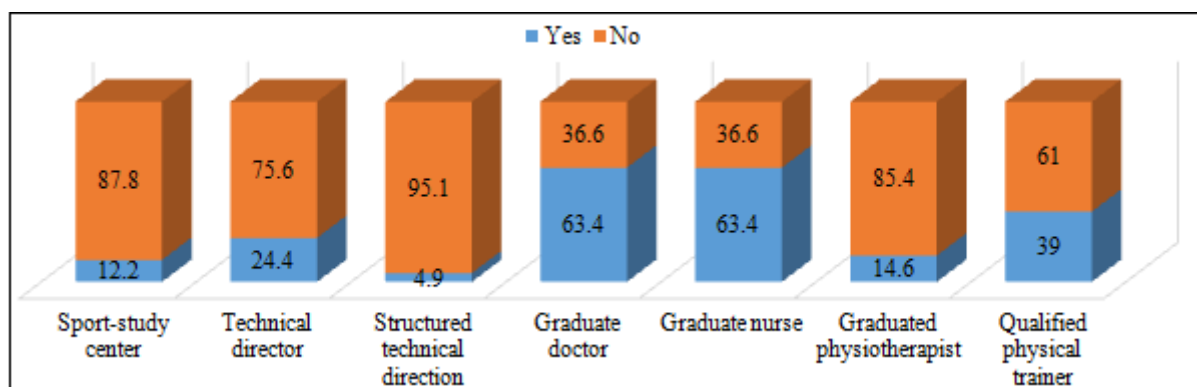


Figure 3: State of technical organization and permanent technical staff within the clubs

From figure 2, it appears that the leaders of the clubs questioned claim to have a qualified doctor (63.4%), a qualified physiotherapist (64.3%), a qualified physical trainer (39%), a technical director (24, 4%), a registered nurse (14.6%), a sport-study training center (12.2%) and finally a structured technical department (4.9%). From these figures, it can be said that the shortages observed (structured technical management, training center, physical trainer, etc.

(see Figure 2) in relation to the results in Table 3 contribute to the low level of clubs with regard to their performance in competitions at the African level. For the past ten years, no club has been able to reach the group stage of these competitions. They attribute this underperformance on the one hand to the premature transfer of players from champion clubs to the Europe and the northern countries and, on the other hand, the disorganization of clubs in general through

the absence, among other shortcomings, of a structured technical direction. Also, despite the efforts of the BFF to organize the competitions in small categories, clubs do not invest in training young people to ensure the succession, as shown by the low rate of training centers (12.2%).

From these different results, it appears that the club's administrative, material, infrastructural and financial conditions are not favorable to the requirements of a professionalization of sport.

3.2. Sports society, a facet of professionalization

Figure 4 below indicates that the leaders surveyed are unanimous on the idea that the sports society has more advantages than the sports association in the field of financing, structuring, management and sports performance of clubs.

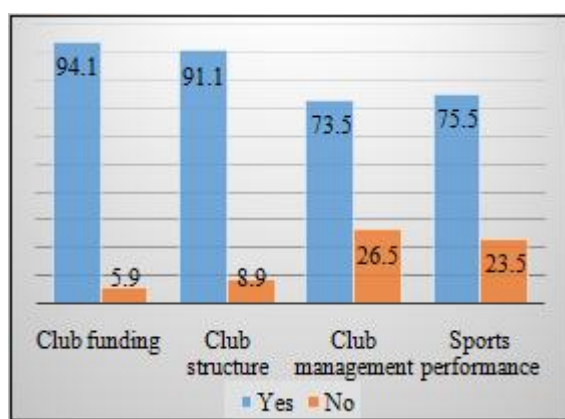


Figure 4: Advantages of the sports society compared to the sports association

Further develop the qualitative results of your interviews (extracts) with federal leaders and the department to present their arguments.

In addition, in the context of Burkina-Faso where the culture of the common good does not seem to be the best shared today, this sports society would be welcome. This may be an opportunity to seize to reconfigure the statutes of sports of Burkina-Faso structures towards an entrepreneurial and commercial form. A phenomenon that would be justified by the rise of the capitalist spirit. As a result, an interviewee declared "we are ready to invest in clubs but we should be very sure of the financial benefits that it will bring us. We will want the state to allow us to organize clubs like our private companies. We want sports entrepreneurship but the texts do not authorize us". For the majority of respondents, the sports company can be a solution to motivate investors in the field of sport in general and football in particular and also improve the culture of transparency, integrity and ethics in the management of structures sports. Thus, a respondent affirms that: "the associative form no longer seems to motivate the actors enough for them to get involved in the clubs. The statutes occupied by the leaders are random and the interests of the actors often diverging with those of the club. The sports association having shown its limits in the context of Burkina-Faso, it is time to promote the advent of sports societies".

In short, with sports companies we could observe improvements in the degree of commitment of the actors and their accountability, the ability to raise funds, rationalization, management, clarity of objectives, clarification of the relationships between the different stakeholders in a sport club and ultimately the improvement of the sports product to make it a marketing product with better national and international marketing. The days of federal and associative hegemony are long gone, and the supply system for sports and physical practices is now an organized market (Augustin, 2003).

If these results are in line with those of Slama (2002) and Dermot-Richard (2013), on the other hand, Douiri (2005) recommends "sports associations with reinforced statuses". The content of "reinforced statutes" amounts to imposing on the association an organization of powers similar to that of the company created in the associative form to maintain their particular legal regime characterized by non-profit making, and to be endowed at the same time with "rigorous management which is notably close to that recommended by commercial companies. The enhanced status is none other than the antechamber of the sports society. In sum, we can say that the sports society has multidimensional advantages and allows clubs to perform.

4. Conclusion

Football is a social phenomenon which contributes to the achievement of strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity for these practitioners by conveying the values of respect, tolerance, mutual understanding and education, in accordance with the principle of society. Nowadays, it is also a privileged area of job creation and a factor of international influence for a country. Unfortunately in Burkina-Faso, the club which constitutes the basic unit for the development of sport is experiencing numerous organizational shortcomings.

In doing so, the general objective of this research was to analyze the organizational structure of Burkina-Faso first division football clubs in a dynamic of professionalization.

To achieve the objectives, we carried out a literature review which allowed us to identify hypotheses and adopt a methodology. We also investigated 202 people, including players, coaches, leaders of D1 football clubs, federal members and MSL executives.

The results of the research initially reveal that D1 football clubs have organizational difficulties. Secondly, the study showed that the establishment of sports companies would be an approach to resolve these difficulties.

Comparing our results with previous work, there are generally similarities. However, the fact that this study only concerns the first division and the fact that the world of economic operators is not taken into account certainly constitutes its limits. In addition, the absence of a comprehensive socio-economic study of the context of Burkina-Faso constitutes another limit because the problem of physical and sports activities in Africa cannot be isolated

from the problem of economic development (Chifflet and Gouda, 1992).

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