

Leadership of Presidents of Brazilian Olympic Sport Federations: Comparison between Real and Ideal Perceived Competencies Profiles According to Their Experience

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Abstract

This research aimed at verifying whether there are differences in behavioural self-perception of presidents of the Brazilian Olympic Sport Federations regarding the real and ideal leadership competencies profiles, taking their time of experience in position into account. This study comprised two complementary studies. The sample of the first study included 83 participants who filled out a translated and adapted version of the Managerial Behaviour Instrument. In the second study, ten presidents of the Olympic Sport Federations of Minas Gerais were interviewed and their answers were content analysed; complementary, there were consulted the statutes of their organizations in what concerns to their duties. Overall, the analysis of the results of both studies showed that all presidents perceived themselves as being competent and, in general, they considered the need of some improvements in their leadership competencies. Furthermore, the presidents declared that, over time, some knowledge and competencies have been acquired and developed, allowing them to adjust management practices. In sum, the time of experience seems to play an important role in the self-perception and development of leadership competencies in these Brazilian presidents.

Keywords: Brazil, leadership competency, Olympic sport federation, presidents, sport management, time of experience

1. Introduction

The 60's represented the start of the progress of sport management as a field of scientific research and academic and professional education (Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007). Ever since, it is possible to notice the emergence of academic courses, specialized scientific journals and professional associations that have contributed to scientific and professional development and to the affirmation of this field. In Brazil, this progress had its breakthrough in the 70's and since then the establishment of professional associations as well as the creation of undergraduate and graduate degrees and professional development courses.

In this scenario of growth of sport management, managers were and still are challenged to search for a career of multiple knowledge and competencies that lead them to effectively develop the tasks assigned to them in sport organizations (Horch & Schuette, 2003). In Brazil, this demand has been even more highlighted due to the main international events that the country has held in the last decade, since the Pan-American Games, in 2007, until the Paralympic Games, in 2016. These events and the recent academic and professional expansion of sport management in the country have also contributed to increase the demand for professionals capable of maximizing the results deriving from the investments made and boosting the impact of sport in the three of its expressions: educational, participation and performance.

Due to the need of every organization of sport, evidenced by these events and by every current activity of the sport organizations, to foment and develop sports, managers play a leading role in the direction and chairmanship of sport bodies and federations for the promotion of sport to and within the community. Due to this importance, scientific research has been developed to understand their roles and competencies in managing sport organizations (Jamieson,

1987). One of the most studied roles within research in sport management is leadership, which is considered one of the most important basic roles of sport managers, reflecting directly in the organizational results (Horch & Schuette, 2003; Mintzberg, 2011; Paton, 1987). With respect to the investigations about managerial leadership, it is possible to verify that, since the 80's, the studies about competencies have been highlighted within the field of sport management on the international scene (Goodarzi et al., 2012; Horch & Schuette, 2003; Jamieson, 1987; Ko et al., 2011; Koustelios, 2003; Lambrecht, 1987; Retar et al., 2013).

The previous studies in sport management have reported the importance of sport managers' competencies to manage sports organizations in different sectors, especially those competencies associated to human relations (Goodarzi et al., 2012; Koustelios, 2003; Lambrecht, 1987), which allow managers to be effective at decision making and human management; creativity (Lambrecht, 1987), that include initiating significant changes and involvement with external members; internal process (Horch&Schuette, 2003; Koustelios, 2003; Retar et al., 2013), which allow managers to control organizational activities and projects; and to productivity (Ko et al., 2011), focusing on competition. Furthermore, these studies have highlighted the value of the competencies by sport managers depending on, for example, the hierarchical level, the organizational size and the activity sector (Horch & Schuette, 2003; Ko et al., 2011; Koustelios, 2003; Lambrecht, 1987).

Researches revealed that the competencies of sports managers differ according to the organizational size. Although there is this difference from of a large organization compared to a smaller one, the "communication" competency is evaluated similarly as the most valuable, highlighting the importance of the informational competency described by Mintzberg (2011), regardless of the size of the organization. These results were found in a research conducted in sports clubs (Lambrecht, 1987), fitness centres (Koustelios, 2003) and campus and public recreation (Barcelona, 2004). This influence of the size may occur due to the higher degree of differentiation in managerial positions within major organizations and, consequently, the competencies required at each hierarchical level (Horch&Schuette, 2003).

Indeed, literature suggests that the leadership competencies vary according to the hierarchical level assumed by sports managers. The studies of Barcelona (2004); Case & Branch (2003) corroborate the literature by emphasizing that the competencies related to technical skills are more important for first-line managers, whereas intermediate managers care more about competencies associated with interpersonal skills, and top managers about the competencies related to conceptual skills (Katz, 1974; Lussier& Kimball, 2009; Quarterman et al., 2011).

With respect to the influence of the activity sector on the competencies to be presented by sports managers, as well as in the other variables studied, there are also differences, mainly because of the different purposes of the organizations and the type of involvement between people (Hoye, 2007; Taylor & McGraw, 2006). For example, in the sectors denominated campus, public and military recreation, it was found that in the first ones the competencies related to knowledge of philosophy, fundamentals and sport science stand out, while in the other two sectors the most important competencies are the programming techniques and management of events skills (Barcelona, 2004; Barcelona & Ross, 2004). Other studies found that the competency associated with human relations is the most valued by managers, as well as communication and leadership (Ko et al., 2011; Quain& Parks, 1986), thus emphasizing the interpersonal competencies described by Mintzberg (2011) regardless of the activity sector.

Among the multiple concepts of competency proposed and presented in literature, this study opted for the concept presented by Quinn (1984); Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath & Clair (2012) who associated competency with the ability of managerial leaders to apply effectively their knowledge and skills to perform managerial tasks through certain leadership behaviours. These competencies, according to literature, might be acquired through formal - usually achieved through academic background - and informal learning - obtained through the experience within the workplace environment (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001). In regard to informal learning, research results that addressed the impact of experience on professional competency and on the development within the work context, evidenced that working experience is one of the factors that most influenced competency acquisition and development, followed by personal characteristics and formal training (Louw et al., 2012; Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro& Reiter-Palmon, 2000; Paloniemi, 2006; Svensson et al., 2004). Besides this, research has also indicated that the accumulation of experience is an important factor to increase self-confidence and allow the faster and more effective execution of routine tasks (Eraut, 2004; Paloniemi, 2006).

In sports, the impact of experience has also been investigated, particularly with respect to the work developed within the technical area. Results of some studies indicate that experience has been considered favourable to an increase in learning and, consequently, to the effective performance and the development of leadership competencies, specially by coaches (Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf & Chung, 2002). However, we are not aware of any study that investigated the relationship between experience and the leadership competencies of the sport manager, as well as the comparison between the self-perceptions of managerial leaders about perceived and ideal leadership profiles that, theoretically,

might be an indication of the gap between his/her current profile and the one considered as the ideal profile to perform his/her roles (Chelladurai, 1984). This comparison has been, within the last five years, explored by studies with coaches (May et al., 2014), but with respect to sport managers investigations addressing this type of approach were not found.

Due to this lack of studies about the relationship between experience and competency of sport managers, as well as between the self-perceptions of the competencies presented and those considered ideal for the role, it is understood that there will be benefits in exploring this subject, not only in terms of the progress of the literature in the field of sport management, but also to promote potential improvements of the managerial practices that might emerge from the utilization of this information. Hence, this study has as main purpose the broadening of the understanding about the way the presidents of Olympic Sport Federations (OSFs) with terms of different durations associate importance to a varied group of competencies and how they distinguish, or not, themselves in the way they perceive to dominate them in their everyday life and prospect them to an ideal manager profile. For such, this research was divided in two complementary studies. The first, of quantitative character, aimed to verify if, according to the different times of experience in the position, there would be different self-perceptions of leadership competencies between the real and ideal profiles of the presidents of Brazilian OSFs, as well as between each of the profiles. The second study, of qualitative character, aimed to increase more the knowledge about this subject, namely through the analysis of statutes of the federations, with respect to the roles of the presidents, as well as the interviews that allowed the presidents to express themselves about the utilization of knowledge and behaviours associated with the leadership competencies employed in the management of an OSFs.

2. Study 1

2.1 Sample

In this study participated 83 presidents from Brazilian OSFs. Among these presidents, 55.4% had up to 48 months of presidency, 20.5% had between 49 and 96 months and 24.1% had more than 97 months. The average time in presidency corresponded to 70 months. The participants were mainly male (90.6%) and were 48.6 years old (± 11.71) in average.

2.2 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the Brazilian-Portuguese version of the Managerial Behaviour Instrument (MBIbr; Freitas, Carvalho, Costa & Fonseca, *in press*). The original instrument was developed by Lawrence, Lenk and Quinn (2009) and is based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF) by Quinn (1984). The instrument comprises four dimensions (Collaborate, Create, Control and Compete), which gather 12 competencies (Facilitator, Mentor, Empathizer, Visionary, Innovator, Motivator, Regulator, Monitor, Coordinator, Competitor, Producer, Driver) and 36 managerial leadership behaviours. According to the purposes of this study this instrument was used to assess the perceptions of the presidents about what they use to do in their daily life (i.e., real) as well to what they believe they should do or they would like to do in an ideal scenario (i.e., ideal).

2.3 Procedures of Data Collection

The presidents were invited via e-mail with the explanation of the nature and objectives, importance and ethical concerns (anonymity, confidentiality and exclusive use of data for research purposes) of the research, informed consent and a personalized link of the online questionnaire with the questions regarding the social demographic data and the behaviours. The electronic and telephone contact details of the researcher responsible for the research were made available, so that the presidents could, in case of need, dispel doubts on filling the questionnaire and on the participation in the research. All procedures were conducted in accordance with the norms established by the Resolution of the National Health Council (466/2012) and by the Declaration of Helsinki (1996) for research with human beings. This study had the approval of the Ethics Committee of the investigation unit of the university in which this study was developed.

2.4 Procedures of Data Analysis

Initially, data normality and homogeneity were verified through Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Levene tests, respectively. Due to the violation assumption of normality of data distribution, non-parametric tests were performed. Then, the data from the study were analysed by the Wilcoxon, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests. Wilcoxon's test allowed comparing the competencies between the real and ideal versions among all presidents, and according to the time of experience in the position. In order to verify whether the perceptions about each competency profile (real and ideal) would vary in function of time of experience in the position, the Kruskal-Wallis test was performed, followed by the Mann-Whitney test, to verify the difference between the groups. For these analyses, the effect size was presented from the correlation coefficient " r ", which reference values are: below 0.29 for low values; between 0.30 and 0.49 for medium values and; above 0.50 for high values (Cohen, 1988).

All statistical procedures were performed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows®, version 20.0, and the significance level adopted was 5%.

2.5 Results

The results of this first study evidenced that the presidents perceive themselves as competent in managing the federations, as mean values were above 4.05 (see Table 1) and with no significant differences between perceptions of the real profile according to the period in the position, as only one significant difference in the ideal profile was registered, with regards to the competency 'Mentor', which presented a low effect size. This difference was observed in the self-perceptions between the group of presidents with up to 48 months in the position and the other two groups.

When comparing the real and ideal profiles, it is possible to observe that all mean values obtained for the competencies of the ideal profile were higher than those of the real profile, thus showing that the presidents acknowledge they need to evolve with regards to the behaviours associated to the leadership competencies for an ideal profile. Amongst the twelve competencies analysed, all displayed significant differences in the self-perceptions of the presidents of the Brazilian OSFs. It was also observed that the effect sizes for these differences are considered medium and high for eleven of the twelve competencies analysed, except for the competency 'Competitor'. By considering the time of experience in the position, results displayed that: i) the presidents with up to 48 months in the position presented significant differences for the self-perception of the twelve leadership competencies, ii) the presidents with 49 to 96 months in the position presented significant differences for the self-perception of the three competencies (Visionary, Coordinator and Driver), and iii) the presidents with more than 97 months in the position presented significant difference in the self-perception of only one competency (Motivator) (see Table 1). All these differences obtained effect size values considered medium or high.

Table 1. Means, standard deviation, significance level and effect size for the comparisons of the real and ideal competency profiles of the presidents of the Brazilian Olympic Federations

		GENERAL																				UP TO 48 MONTHS (Group 1)				49 TO 96 MONTHS (Group 2)				ABOVE 97 MONTHS (Group 3)				1x2		1x3		1x2x3	
		Real		Ideal		p	r	Real		Ideal		p	r	Real		Ideal		p	r	Real		Ideal		p	r	Real	Ideal												
		Mea	SD	Mea	SD			Mea	SD	Mea	SD			Mea	SD	Mea	SD			Mea	SD	Mea	SD					Mea	SD										
Collaborate	Facilitator	4.64	0.4	4.78	0.3	0.002	0.3	4.69	0.3	4.83	0.3	0.01	0.3	4.57	0.4	4.75	0.3	0.0	0.4	4.60	0.4	4.68	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.49	0.31												
	Mentor	4.36	0.7	4.63	0.5	<	0.4	4.43	0.6	4.78	0.3	<0.0	0.5	4.33	0.6	4.43	0.6	0.4	0.2	4.20	0.9	4.43	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.69	0.02												
	Empathizer	4.44	0.6	4.63	0.4	0.005	0.3	4.42	0.7	4.66	0.4	0.03	0.3	4.51	0.3	4.63	0.4	0.1	0.3	4.42	0.5	4.53	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.92	0.74												
Create	Visionary	4.34	0.6	4.67	0.4	<	0.5	4.41	0.6	4.75	0.4	<0.0	0.6	4.08	0.7	4.47	0.6	0.0	0.6	4.38	0.6	4.67	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.20	0.16												
	Innovator	4.42	0.5	4.59	0.5	0.003	0.3	4.50	0.4	4.71	0.4	0.00	0.4	4.37	0.6	4.31	0.7	0.9	0.0	4.30	0.5	4.58	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.35	0.12												
	Motivator	4.29	0.6	4.49	0.5	<	0.4	4.29	0.5	4.54	0.5	0.00	0.4	4.24	0.6	4.31	0.6	0.4	0.1	4.28	0.7	4.55	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.91	0.48												
Control	Regulator	4.39	0.5	4.68	0.4	<	0.4	4.41	0.5	4.78	0.3	<0.0	0.5	4.33	0.5	4.51	0.5	0.2	0.2	4.43	0.5	4.62	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.87	0.12												
	Monitor	4.40	0.5	4.60	0.4	0.002	0.3	4.37	0.6	4.62	0.4	0.00	0.3	4.27	0.4	4.53	0.5	0.0	0.4	4.57	0.5	4.62	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.19	0.80												
	Coordinator	4.38	0.5	4.65	0.4	<	0.4	4.35	0.5	4.66	0.4	0.00	0.5	4.45	0.5	4.69	0.4	0.0	0.4	4.42	0.5	4.63	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.80	0.95												
Competence	Competitor	4.05	0.9	4.18	0.9	0.013	0.2	4.03	0.9	4.16	0.9	0.04	0.3	3.96	0.9	4.02	0.9	0.6	0.1	4.13	0.7	4.35	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.93	0.48												
	Producer	4.13	0.8	4.37	0.7	<	0.3	4.03	0.9	4.30	0.9	0.00	0.4	4.18	0.6	4.41	0.6	0.2	0.3	4.30	0.6	4.48	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.73	0.93												
	Driver	4.33	0.6	4.62	0.5	<	0.5	4.30	0.6	4.60	0.5	0.00	0.5	4.37	0.5	4.71	0.4	0.0	0.6	4.37	0.5	4.58	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.89	0.70												

* Significant difference between Groups 1 and 2 (p=0.029 and r=0.27) and the Groups 1 and 3 (p=0.018 and r=0.29)

3. Study 2

3.1 Sample

Ten presidents of Minas Gerais OSFs participated in this study. Amongst these participants, 60% presided the federation for a period of up to 48 months, 20% between 49 and 96 months and 20% for more than 97 months. The participation of male presidents was predominant (9 men and 1 woman) and the average age of participants was 51.3 years (±10.92).

3.2 Instrument

The semi-structured interview applied in this study was developed based on the conceptual framework of the Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Lawrence et al., 2009; Quinn, 1984) and according to the proposed goals. The respective roadmap comprised 42 open-ended questions, in a first part including the presidents' social-demographic and functional data and, in a second part, the leadership competencies.

The interview was analysed by three experts, all holding a PhD in Sport Sciences with expertise in qualitative research, who suggested some small modifications. After the implementation of this improvement, the interview was approved unanimously. In possession of the approved roadmap, it was done a pilot study with a vice-president of a Brazilian OSFs seeking to ensure the understanding of questions and their relevance. In view of this process, no substantial modification was made, thus resulting in the final interview roadmap.

3.3 Procedures of Data Collection

The presidents who agreed to take part in this research scheduled the interview according to their availability of location

and time, between March and August 2014. Prior to the start of all interviews, the presidents were reminded of the aim of the study, confidentiality and anonymity. Then, before to start the interview, which was recorded with their authorization, they also sign the Informed Consent. Aiming to complement some information collected in the interviews, especially about the specific duties of the presidents, the statutes of the respective federations were requested and cordially handed by them.

All research procedures with respect to ethical concerns were the same as those described in Study 1.

3.4 Procedures of Data Analysis

Initially, the interviews were heard and fully transcribed (*ad verbatim*), so as to seek a familiarization of the investigators with the material and achieve a first level of thematic approach. Next, the interviews were analysed several times with the aim of promoting the immersion of the investigators in the data to understand their extension and depth. After this immersion, data were identified and incorporated in themes that corresponded to the reality under analysis and the theoretical model of this study (Lawrence et al., 2009; Quinn, 1984).

With respect to the statutes, we proceeded to the documental analysis, in regard to the tasks assigned to the presidents provided in these documents. After this analysis the grouping and categorization were performed, resulting in nine applied tasks common to all ten statutes analysed, namely: making decisions; to summon and chair meetings; to manage human, financial and asset resources; to supervise, coordinate, direct, and monitor the internal and external activities within the organization; to manage sport projects and events; to sign contracts; to relate with members and affiliates; to relate with public and private agencies; and, lastly, to represent the federation.

3.5 Results

We present below the results of the qualitative study, by showing excerpts of interviews of presidents, considering the Competing Values Framework (Lawrence et al., 2009; Quinn, 1984) and the tasks from the statutes of these organizations. The excerpts of the interviews identified as source of I1, I4, I6, I8, I9 and I10 are related to the presidents who possess time of presidency between 1 and 48 months. Those identified as I2 and I3 correspond to the presidents with 49 to 96 months and the I5 and I7 pertained to presidents with more than 97 months in the position.

3.5.1 Collaborate Dimension

Included in the Collaborate dimension, the competencies 'Facilitator', 'Mentor' and 'Empathizer' reflect the leadership behaviours based on the interpersonal relations, encouraging the involvement of members from the organization, thus developing people and acknowledging personal needs.

-Facilitator

Employing the democratic leadership style for decision-making in the federations has proven to be effective with respect to the execution of actions that lead to the results and purpose from the organization to the society, such as the offering of events. Besides this, it is possible to verify that an atmosphere open for debates facilitates participatory decisions and favours the workplace environment and the interpersonal relations. It can be seen with great propriety in the excerpts of the interviews below, the tasks of human resources management and decision-making.

“The first step I took was to decentralize my administration. With that, I could see that, over time, people gained more confidence and our relations got better for the sake of results.” (I2)

“It is a very good feedback, as since I delegated and gave them responsibilities to fulfil, an exchange began, I delegate them tasks and autonomy and they give me feedback according to the event.” (I7)

-Mentor

Some strategies of development of personnel within sport federations were emphasized essentially taking into account the promotion of specific training for the members related with the function of human resources and, possibly, financial management. The presidents with less time of experience in the position reported that they have already offered trainings and courses, such as updates and trainings for referees and management courses for the recently hired members of the executive body. However, the more experienced presidents report that they develop such actions, but not with so much emphasis as during the years of their first terms.

“Education at the level of administration, really. Explain to her (the secretary) how things are done, the right ways, the correct ways, document issues really, that did not exist before.” (I1)

“When I arrived here for the first time, I insisted on training the employees and showing them professional perspectives... Eventually, these trainings started decreasing, partly because they knew many processes and what was important. We understood each other. I could also notice that there are other things within the federation that interested them and their careers” (I2)

-Empathizer

The acknowledgment of personal needs was mentioned as a competency that the presidents themselves reported to have developed over time, through daily contact or meetings. It is also possible to notice that they were aware of the situational demands arising from external and internal activities. For them, time was key to solidify interpersonal relations with members and to better understand their needs.

“We see what is the best benefit we can bring, what are the things people are unhappy with and what we can do to help them. It is not an easy task, one I can learn with time, but by getting to know people and earning their trust it becomes easier.” (I6)

“The federation promotes around 80 games a year, we have to make score sheets, athlete's registrations... It is complicated for only two people to make referees' schedules, travel tickets, hotel reservations... It has not given any problems, except that they are overloaded. In the beginning I had no idea, but now, after following some events, I can see it better.” (I10)

3.5.2 Create Dimension

The Create dimension is characterized by leadership behaviours that value anticipation of the needs of associations and/or clubs, through the promotion of significant changes and through the inspiration of people to exceed expectations, thus representing, respectively, the 'Visionary', 'Innovator' and 'Motivator' competencies.

-Visionary

The relation established by managers with the external environment of the organization has in its core the tasks of representing the federation, relationship with the members and affiliates and with the public and private agencies. As seen in the excerpt of the president I10, they try to support the clubs the best way possible and to understand their needs. However, as reported by president I3, there is a limitation in relation to this competency, which is related to the structure of the organization, in which they deal with the limited amount of human resources to conduct the works of the federation.

“The clubs acknowledge that there have been improvements, that we are doing our best to meet their needs, but they still want more. But I have tried to assist them in everything they ask me for, such as sports equipment, meetings, logistics and tables...” (I10)

"Today, with the affiliates, I give them limited feedback because alone I am not able to answer the thousand athletes we have. I believe that over time I increased my competency of dealing with them, especially with those with whom I am closer to and who are aware of our difficulties. " (I3)

-Innovator

The implementation of the 'Innovator' competency in the context of the Brazilian OSFs was demonstrated by the effort of the presidents in relation to the development of sport projects in order to obtain financial resources and/or promotion of sports. It is possible to see through the presidents' reports with less time of experience in the position that the issue of innovation and creativity does not depend solely on the presidents themselves, but also on the financial conditions and the process of transition between the managements that, in some cases, make it impossible to reach the expected results and present the required competencies.

“Last year I had a project... actually it was not taken further because of a lack of resources. I believe that only with time here is that I will be able to do what has to be done to that effect, because by then I will have more knowledge about the process and about which way to go.” (I1)

“... Thus, it was an extremely limited budget, that almost prevented me from accomplishing anything new, from looking for development, an innovation, new actions, new ideas, new projects...” (I4)

-Motivator

On the expectation of inspiring the subordinates to be creative, as well as encouraging them to try alternatives and have performance compatible with the statutory duties within the organization, the presidents of the federations reported that they performed these behaviours daily, and both the less and more experienced consider that the time in the position does not influence this performance. However, the presidents with more experience believe they can be better in motivating their subordinates. They believe that the amount of tasks they have might be the limiting factor for the time

they could be with them and motivate them for the actions of the organization.

“Of course I encourage the creativity of the employees, I need to do this. This attitude is important to achieve our goals, because if they are not motivated the federation does not grow...” (I1)

“In the beginning I focused too much on motivation. But with time, many other things emerged. When I attend an event, I always have to speak with many people that support the federation and I end up becoming distant of the technical staff that works there.” (I7)

3.5.3 Control Dimension

The Control dimension comprises the 'Regulator', 'Monitor' and 'Coordinator' competencies that allow, respectively, clarifying the institutional policies to members, making employees execute their work with precision and controlling the projects.

-Regulator

The excerpts of the interviews demonstrated that the presidents are concerned whether the members understand the federation's procedures, and whether the formal policies and guidelines of the institution are clear and well assimilated by the members. At the start they supervise the work more closely by the fact of having, in many cases, limited previous contact with the members or having new working teams when they take over the federation. However, with time, the behaviours related to the policy of the institution start to be executed automatically and they supervise more distantly the fulfilment.

“The secretary is in experience phase. I have already provided her with the documents of the federation, so she can understand the procedures and policies and have already instructed her about her responsibilities in understanding the routine...” (I8)

“... what we notice of an understanding about the federation's policies and guidelines begins by the way of acting of its employees, by their involvement, by the daily feedback they provide about the guidelines we established.” (I9)

-Monitor

The presidents with less time in the position considered that they have to emphasize more the behaviours associated with this competency in order to reach an ideal profile. However, the presidents with more time in the position perceive themselves performing tasks of supervising and coordinating the execution of members' activities as closer to ideal for their reality.

“In my administration we do not say we are not going to make mistakes, we say we are going to make less mistakes. Then, the mistakes will happen, we just cannot insist on these mistakes... you must always demand accuracy at work. I believe that, as I have more administration time in the federation this will become easier to achieve because people will already be aware of my rigour and of the purposes of my administration...” (I1)

“I try to ask maximum commitment from them. I know they do the best they can, even when I am not there. With time I learned that some imperfections in their actions are not exclusively related to the lack of commitment, but rather to the structural limitations we have.” (I3)

-Coordinator

In addition to the signing of contracts that financially enable the development of projects, the coordination by the president requires a rigorous management and monitoring of its execution. However, the fact that the federation is a non-profit organization and in general is managed by volunteers causes some limitations to be present in the work of the presidents. In this respect, some presidents reported that, due to the time of dedication, they do not have time to perform behaviours associated to this competency, as expected, often delegating the responsibility of controlling institutional projects to members of the technical staff. The transition between terms was also mentioned as a critical issue for the continuity of projects or potentiation of results to the society.

“We currently have a manager, a general manager that manages the day-to-day of the federation... It certainly is a competency that we accumulate with time because the knowledge on project management is very rich, but since I do not have full-time for the federation, it is very difficult.” (I4)

“It took us much time to be aware of the characteristics of the projects. If we had had a more balanced transition between the previous and the current administration, I think we would have caught things easier and the impacts would certainly be greater.” (I10)

3.5.4 Compete Dimension

The 'Competitor', 'Producer' and 'Driver' gather, respectively, leadership behaviours that aim to reach institutional results

through the focus on competition, hard work and responsiveness to the problems and that generate results.

-Competitor

The excerpts of the interviews below demonstrate the concern with obtaining results, particularly with regard to the strengthening of the sport and the promotion to the society. The competition assumes that they should be better in the future than in the present. For this, the presidents reported that at the start of the administration they define the objective they intend to reach and the goals they are supposed to achieve.

“In relation to the competition, what we most want is, first, to rescue the credibility of the XXX Federation of Minas Gerais (the sport of the federation was deliberately suppressed) for only then think about other things. We are competing with ourselves.” (I1)

“In this aspect, our great objective is really to rescue XXX (the sport was deliberately suppressed) at the national level.” (I10)

“We have our goals and we struggle a lot to achieve them. This is very important to strengthen ourselves, strengthen the movement of the federations, always in partnership and on behalf of the Brazilian XXX (the sport was deliberately suppressed).” (I9)

-Producer

It is possible to see in the interviews conceded by the presidents that they frequently execute essential tasks so that the activities of the federation might be carried out. This is a limitation in the management of these organizations due to the financial and structural problems mentioned, whereas these activities should be executed not by him, but by other professionals. The fact that the working team within these organizations are often small also makes the amount of work great for the people involved.

“We occupy a very broad sphere that goes from the administrative area to the issues of financial control, marketing, political contacts that involve this administration and in the administration itself, management of one's own office.” (I9)

“... Then I was president, technical director, director of refereeing, that is, I took over many functions that were not part of my expertise.” (I3)

“These days it is becoming necessary that you stay longer. I come at least two, three times a week, and part of it I do at home... I also make of my house an extension of the federation.” (I5)

Another fact regards the voluntary management of the federations, in which presidents are not paid and, for this reason, have a limitation of time to execute all tasks under the federations' statutes. As we could verify, the job they carry and the role that the federations have in the country's sports scenario, causes them to be pushed for results and professionalism. However, because they share their professional life with other jobs, they cannot afford to devote themselves as much as they consider being enough and, because of that, they claim for more support.

“... Brazilian sport needs managers that are fully dedicated to sport. In my case many things that should be done end up not being done because I do not have time. I cannot give up my time at work to fully devote myself to the federation.” (I10)

“I think that our model ends up demanding the president of the organization to have another activity. But it is true that it annoys. If you had the option to fully devote yourself, the organization would probably have better results or could have taken faster steps than with my current physical presence.” (I4)

-Driver

The presidents with less time in the position reported they dedicate much of their time to solving financial problems initiated in past administrations and securing new revenues, either by sponsors or governments. This financial limitation associated to reaching results has been the most highlighted aspect by these presidents. On the other hand, the presidents with more time in the position more easily bypass this situation due to the fact that past administrations did not present financial deficits or that they were balanced. They reported that the facility of relations and networking developed in previous years allow them to give faster answers for the demand. Besides this, they consider that previous experience allow them to obtain better planning and adjust between the expected and the real.

“Usually, when you take over a sport organization you find a scenario of great (financial) difficulty and that you need to implement a series of ideas, a series of projects that each one has... when you start looking for support, either in the public or private sphere, it takes time until you gain credibility and people understand your objective, your planning and financially support you, because you need to show your work, you need to talk, you need to explain.” (I4)

4. General Discussion

This research had as main objective contributing to the promotion and development of sport management, so as to help understanding how the presidents of the Brazilian OSFs give importance to a set of leadership competencies for management practice. In this sense, we sought to analyse whether there were or not differences between the way presidents perceived to behave, as well as verify whether there were or not differences at this level, when we analysed data according to their experience and in the perspective of an ideal profile of competencies for a president.

The results of the quantitative study demonstrated that all presidents perceived themselves as competent to fulfil the tasks associated with their position of presidency and perform behaviours associated with the twelve leadership competencies. These results that highlight the performance of behaviours associated with the multiple competencies of the presidents of Brazilian OSFs resemble results from other studies that assessed the competencies profile of managers/leaders in other countries, and indicated that the sport manager perform functions that include internal and external activities with respect to the organization, in which the 'Facilitator' and 'Visionary' competencies are highlighted in studies conducted in the USA, Iran and Greece (Goodarzi et al., 2012; Koustelios, 2003; Lambrecht, 1987), the 'Motivator' competency in other studies conducted in the USA and Taiwan (Ko et al., 2011; Lambrecht, 1987), and the 'Competitor', 'Driver', 'Coordinator', 'Regulator' and 'Monitor' for studies conducted in Germany, Slovenia and Greece (Horch & Schuette, 2003; Koustelios, 2003; Retar et al., 2013). According to the findings of these investigations and to the theoretical assumptions present in literature, the application of these multiple competencies through managerial practices has allowed managers to reach organizational effectiveness with respect to human relations, acquisition of resources, control of internal processes and productivity of the organization (Lawrence et al., 2009; Quinn et al., 2012).

With respect to the comparison of the presidents' perceptions according to an ideal profile of leadership competencies for the job, we verified that they only differ in the 'Mentor' competency. In this case, the presidents who are in their first term in relation to the others, considered that there is a need to encourage more training and dedication to the development of personnel, in regard to their careers. However, presidents with more than 49 months in the position do not emphasize this aspect so much. In the qualitative study, it was demonstrated that this occurs because as time passes by, there is more synergy between the president and the employees, thus facilitating communication and the execution of procedures. Besides this, the president is able to foresee other points of interest for the employees' careers that lead to job satisfaction.

When it was compared the leadership competencies that the presidents possess and those they consider ideal for the job, it was verified that as time in presidency increases, the differences between self-perceptions decrease. Therefore, the less experienced presidents consider that there are more differences between the real and ideal behaviour whereas the more experienced consider that the way they behave is closer to the ideal. This fact may occur for many reasons. One of them might be associated with the fact that experience gives the presidents more knowledge about the reality, what facilitates the comprehension of the context and the adjustment of management practice and, by the cycle of cause and effect, their self-perceptions are also adjust with time (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001; Louw et al., 2012; Mumford et al., 2000). Another reason lies, according to literature, in the fact that experience is an active process in which people are constantly exposed to events, and the reconstruction of these events contribute to behavioural changes, which are required for the development of competencies (Louw et al., 2012; Mumford et al., 2000; Paloniemi, 2006).

Given the results from both studies, it was verified that the presidents with up to 48 months in the position considered that they needed to qualify their managerial behaviours in all the twelve leadership competencies so as to be able to perform ideally the statutory duties related to their jobs. They elected as the main obstacles for the effectiveness of their managerial leadership behaviours in the Brazilian OSFs the work overload, the limitation of financial resources, the availability of time as they have to work in other companies and the difficulties in the transition from one administration to another, that is often associated to the loss of information for the sequence of projects and maximization of results. Given this reality, these presidents reported that they began to manage an unstructured organization that resulted from the difficulties experienced in the previous administration or even a mishandled succession process. In this case, the managerial behaviours performed by these presidents within the first years of their terms tend to focus on solving problems of organizational restructuring. In this scenario, and as demonstrated by other studies, fundraising projects are threatened, as well as the relationship with internal and external members, competitive events, the development of sport in schools and communities, among others (Hoye, 2007).

Particularly in the group of presidents with 49 to 96 months in the position, the differences observed demonstrated that the managers might still develop their leadership competencies in terms of anticipation of the needs of the associations and clubs, control of projects and emphasis on the speed of responses to internal and external members. As verified in the interviews, these needs occur due to the fact that the organization is too dependent on factors such as financial

resources and structural policy, thus hindering a more proactive management from the presidents. These results corroborate the findings of Soares et al. (2010), who, in the study about the voluntary sports associations from the Autonomous Region of the Madeira, verified that the organizational strategies and decision making are largely influenced by the sport policies that, in turn, is dependent on public resources and external partnerships.

In the perception of the more experienced presidents, with more than 97 months in the position, the competencies they possess are very close to those they consider ideal for the position they occupy. The only significant difference indicated is related to the 'Motivator' competency, which gathers behaviours aimed at inspiring people to excel expectations. This result demonstrates that, despite the presidents with more time of experience in the position value the performance of this competency, they do not behave they way they consider as being ideal. One of the reasons for this result might be related, as also verified in other studies, with the limitation of the human and financial structure faced by organizations of this nature, in which presidents work with a limited staff (da Costa, 1971). Besides this, these presidents acknowledge they need to improve the support to the motivation of their members, once in the domain of human resources management in organizations based on volunteering, as in the case of sports federations in Brazil, literature has indicated that the employees should be managed differently, since they are more susceptible to abruptly leave an organization than hired employees (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

In general, as reported by the presidents, the extended time in the management of a federation might represent a capital gain for the development of leadership competencies necessary to the management and the execution of long-term work of promoting sports, since that, among other aspects, the organizational and technical knowledge and the political articulations demand time to be executed and gain credibility. Because of this, manage a sport federation for longer allows to expand this knowledge and skills necessary to management for the sake of organizational objectives (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001; Eraut, 2004; Louw et al., 2012; Mumford et al., 2000; Paloniemi, 2006; Svensson et al., 2004).

Thus, despite the presidents interviewed in this research indicate that the acquisition and development of leadership competencies to manage sport federations may emerge from an extended time of presidency term, we understand it would be interesting for the manager to previously interact with the federation through other management positions for example and only then, from the moment they gain confidence and knowledge about the organizational structure and managerial practices, to run for presidency. This would allow that presidents, instead of acquiring competencies to manage the federation after they have taken over the job, could already possess them within the start of the first term, thus being able to apply them effectively since the beginning by better managing resources, investing in expansion and development projects for the federation and maximizing organizational results.

5. Conclusion

This research indicates that the presidents of the Brazilian Olympic Sport Federations, regardless of the time in the position, perceive themselves as being competent in performing tasks associated with the management of the organization. With respect to the ideal profile of leadership competency for the job, participants also presented similar perceptions, except for the 'Mentor' competency that, in turn, displayed low effect size values. Through the interviews, it was verified that from the moment they gain experience in the position, they acquire more managerial practice, thus allowing the structuration of knowledge that underlies the performance of behaviours associated with the managerial tasks under the statute of the federations.

One of the limitations of this research lies on the fact that there is no collect data on the results from the managerial practices of these presidents. Thus, we suggest that future investigations analyse the relation between the time of experience in the position and the leadership competencies by verifying which results achieved by the federation would be associated with these variables. From the data of this research, we expect that the knowledge about leadership competencies in sport management might be expanded and contribute to the manager's education before taking over position on managerial leadership.

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