Combinations of key determinants of performance in sport governing bodies

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to focus on possible combinations of the key determinants of high performance in sport governing bodies (SGBs) which go well beyond the net effects of independent variables.

Design/methodology/approach – The research focused on 18 sport governing bodies from the French-speaking community of Belgium (CSGBs). Their strategic goals are emphasized and their potential determinants of performance are measured and assessed. Due to the small n-sample and the causal complexity inherent in this research, a crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA) was performed.

Findings – Three generic combinations of the key determinants linked with high performance were highlighted. The first was high-performing CSGBs that provide innovative activities for their membership and are proactive in elite sport services. The second was other high-performing CSGBs of large size that involve paid staff in decision-making processes and also develop innovative activities. The third was small-sized governing bodies which, although they do not have extensive resources, could perform highly when they relied on volunteer leaders and delegates activities they were not able to deliver.

Research limitations/implications – Due to country and sport specificities, these results may not be generalized to all SGBs. Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that when trying to understand the performance of such complex nonprofit sport organizations, researchers and practitioners need to take into account combinations of factors, rather than independent performance variables.

Originality/value – Using an innovative mixed method design dealing with causal complexity – qualitative comparative analysis – the paper highlights combinations of factors observed in high performing SGBs.

Keywords Belgium, Sport governing bodies, Organizational performance, Determinants, Performance appraisal, Qualitative comparative analysis

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Sport governing bodies (SGBs) face increasing pressure to be more performance oriented (Bayle and Madella, 2002) and there is a significant body of literature that considers relevant approaches to organizational performance in the sport management literature (Balduck, 2009; Bayle and Madella, 2002; Bayle and Robinson, 2007; Chelladurai et al., 1987; Frisby, 1986; Koski, 1995; Madella, 1998; Madella et al., 2005; Papadimitriou, 1999, 2002, 2007; Papadimitriou and Taylor, 2000; Shilbury and Moore, 2006; Vail, 1985; Winand et al., 2010; Wolfe et al., 2002). These approaches primarily consist of the identification of dimensions of performance and the range of indicators measuring them. However, little research
in this field has focussed on combinations of factors that facilitate high performance. The main reason for this is that it is difficult to understand how organizational aspects of SGBs act and interact to produce high performance (Bayle and Robinson, 2007).

This papers aims to address this gap by arguing that complex combinations of factors might lead to performance in the nonprofit sector (Cairns et al., 2005; Caldwell et al., 2008; Schmid, 2002). Therefore, our research intends to highlight combinations of the key determinants linked with high performance of SGBs. To do this, an appropriate method taking into account causal complexity is needed and we use an innovative method called qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (Ragin, 1987). This configurational comparative approach develops a conception of causality that leaves room for complexity (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 1994; Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). A call for such mixed method approaches has emerged in the sport management literature as they are considered to lead to a “better understanding of both causal description and causal explanation” (Rudd and Johnson, 2010, p. 23).

We focus on SGBs in Belgium. Generally speaking, national sport governing bodies (NSGBs) have as their strategic goals, the requirement to organize sport activities and competition for their membership. However, in Belgium, a great majority of the linguistic communities’ sport governing bodies (CSGBs) are in charge of these tasks and activities due to the organization and coordination of Sport by Communities since 1977. This paper considers the 49 competition oriented (versus leisure oriented) SGBs from the French-speaking community of Belgium (called CSGBs here after). These sport organizations are small nonprofit organizations: two thirds had <5,000 members in 2005, with a range of 263 members (French-speaking Olympic Wrestling League) to 45,439 members (Wallonia-Brussels Basketball Association). Due to their recognition by authorities, CSGBs are affected to the same systems of regulation which allow them to receive grants. This makes it possible to compare these sporting organizations.

First, organizational performance in the SGB context is presented to highlight their strategic goals and the potential determinants of their performance. This is followed by a presentation of the methodology and its application to the organizational performance of CSGBs. We measure their performance and assess their internal functioning. Finally, building upon crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (csQCA) (Ragin, 1987, 2008; Rihoux and Ragin, 2008), we highlight combinations of key determinants that are linked with high performance and discuss the empirical findings of this analysis.

2. Literature review: organizational performance of SGBs
According to researchers (Baruch and Ramalho, 2006; Kaplan, 2001; Speckbacher, 2003; Stone et al., 1999), the definition of organizational performance for nonprofit organizations is relatively complex. Indeed, it has different meanings for different people, hence there are conceptual ambiguities and difficulties in measuring it (Cameron, 1986; Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 1983). However, in the sport management literature, we select the definition of organizational performance proposed by Madella et al. (2005), who studied NSGBs. It refers to “the ability to acquire and process properly human, financial and physical resources to achieve the goals of the organization” (Madella et al., 2005, p. 209). As the authors state, it requires a multidimensional approach, combining financial and nonfinancial measures, which is crucial in the not for profit (NPO) context as was suggested by Herman and Renz (1999). As a result, organizational performance should be understood as the combination of the “means and ends” of organizations. The “means” group the determinants of performance,
including the human and managerial skills. The “ends” group the strategic goals of the organization, which are the raison d’être of the organization. Therefore, based on the literature about the NPO and NSGB contexts we highlight general strategic goals and potential determinants of success of governing bodies. Each one is adapted in the CSGB context in line with the advice of experts involved in a focus group discussion: two Chairs, one administrative director and the Vice-President of the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee.

2.1 Strategic goals of CSGBs
According to Bayle and Madella (2002), Chelladurai et al. (1987), Frisby (1986), Madella et al. (2005), Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) and Shilbury and Moore (2006) there are three strategic goals that are essential to the multidimensional models of organizational performance that they have proposed: elite sport, sport for all and customers. These strategic goals are also those determined by authorities for all the 49 SGBs we study.

The elite sport strategic goal refers to the objectives “to obtain international sport results” and “to increase athletes’ participation in international sport competitions,” whereas the sport for all strategic goal includes the objective “to increase sport activities for membership.” The customers’ strategic goal groups the nonsport strategic objectives of CSGBs including “to sustain sport values in society” and “to increase their membership figures.” We assume that the achievement of these three strategic goals will result in high organizational performance in CSGBs which can be reached through key determinants.

2.2 Potential determinants of performance for CSGBs
Ten potential determinants[1] related to high performance of nonprofit organizations and SGBs were selected from the literature. They include human and managerial skills, organizational size and sport objectives (whether their sport is included in the Olympic Games or not). We did not take into account the age of CSGBs because a great majority were created in 1977 and 1978, as a consequence of the organization and coordination of Sport by Communities. The experts involved in the focus group discussion confirmed the influence of these determinants in the CSGB context. We present each determinant, numbered from “1” to “10” in the following sections and explain what they refer to.

Centralization and governance of volunteer(s). Glisson and Martin (1980, p. 33) underlined the fact that a “highly centralized human service organization is likely to be highly productive.” They highlight the involvement of paid staff in the decision-making processes as a key criterion of governance. In the SGB context, Bayle (1999) argued that the character of the Chair (usually a volunteer) has an effect on performance. He made a distinction between the Chair as the main (and the only) decision maker and the involvement of other volunteers and/or paid staff in the decision-making process. Therefore, we distinguish centralization of decision-making processes from the governance of volunteer(s). Centralization (1) refers to the number of decision makers in CSGBs, whether only one or two leaders are in charge of decisions in CSGBs or several factors. Governance of volunteer(s) (2) refers to the role of the decision maker(s) in the organization, whether the decisions making processes involve only volunteer(s) or also paid staff.

Task oriented and supervision. Schmid (2002) highlighted combinations of factors affecting each other and linked the decentralization/centralization of management to
the professionalization of the staff of human service organizations. Decentralized management is most appropriate where staff are primarily professional, so organizational structure and patterns of management tend to be relatively informal and flexible whereas centralized management is most appropriate where high levels of supervision are required and there is formalized decision making (Crittenden et al., 2004; Schmid, 2002). The sport management literature (Bayle, 1999; Papadimitriou, 2002; Thibault et al., 1991; Zintz, 2004) focuses on the role played by technical paid staff (in charge of the organization of sport activities) and the delegation of tasks. As CSGBs are very small organizations with few staff (60 percent have two or fewer paid staff), their organization chart is flat and therefore some structures overlap and formalism is reduced (Zintz and Camy, 2005). Consequently, task orientation and supervision (3) focuses on the presence of an individual (for instance a volunteer) in charge of the division of labor and supervision of paid staff. The latter can also manage themselves, depending on their experience.

**Vision.** Several researchers have pointed to the involvement of board members of nonprofit organizations in strategic planning as a key factor related to performance (Bradshaw et al., 1992; Siciliano, 1997). As well, Brown (2005) identified the adherence of the board to the organization’s strategic goals as one factor of success. In the sport organization context, Bayle and Madella (2002) and Madella et al. (2005) underlined not only the role of board members in high performance, but also the organizational atmosphere created by paid staff and the involvement of sport clubs, which form part of the vision of CSGBs. Consequently, the vision (4) of CSGBs refers to the development of a strategy shared by the staff of CSGBs (volunteers and paid staff) and the relationship between them, and with sport clubs. The involvement of board members in strategic planning and their adherence to agreed strategic goals with a clear vision of the future of their CSGB is likely to be essential.

**External relations.** The connection to influential funders developed by board members of nonprofit organizations (Brown, 2005) or the connection of SGBs to national or international partners (Madella et al., 2005; Papadimitriou and Taylor, 2000), as well as their ability to promote their sport (Bayle, 1999) might affect their performance. As a result, external relations (5) refers to the strength of the external contacts of board members with local, national, international and commercial partnerships. It also refers to the promotion of the sport of CSGBs and each one affects the other. Partnerships make it possible to invest in promotion which might attract additional new partners.

**Financial independence.** The ability of board members of nonprofit organizations to attract resources has been emphasized by Brown (2005) and Smith and Shen (1996) as a factor, combined with others, that is linked to organizational effectiveness. In the CSGB context, this is demonstrated mainly by independence from public funds, because significant sponsorship resources are rare (Zintz, 2004). A CSGB which receives < 40 percent of its funding from public resources is considered to be financially independent (6) whereas a CSGB which receives > 40 percent of its funding from public resources is considered to be financially dependent (Zintz, 2004). The latter CSGB is likely to be weak at self-financing (Winand, 2009).

**Innovative activities.** Innovation refers to the development of a new idea which will be of benefit to the organization (Camisón-Zornoza et al., 2004; Damanpour, 1987; Read, 2000). It can lead to higher performance (Deshpande et al., 1993), no matter if the organization is a for or NPO organization. In terms of CSGBs, we focus on the innovative processes they put in place to satisfy their members, that is innovative
activities (7). These activities could be seen as a specific type of innovation called service innovation (Damanpour and Aravind, forthcoming 2012; Winand et al., 2011). An example of this is the CSGB support services and programs to increase mass participation in sport and to develop sport activities (Madella et al., 2005; Slack and Parent, 2006).

**Elite training structure.** One determinant of performance has been highlighted specifically in the SGB context (Deloitte and Touche Consulting Group, 2003; Madella et al., 2005; Papadimitriou and Taylor, 2000). It concerns the services SGBs provide to their elites. Elite training structure (8) refers to active strategies and programs implemented to identify talented members, to develop their sport potential and to support their training. According to researchers, this might facilitate elite performance. Due to the size of CSGBs in comparison with NSGB from other countries, elite training structures are small scale.

**Size and sport objectives.** Size (9) has long been linked with performance. It can be interpreted as the number of customers or staff (Papadimitriou, 2002; Slack, 1985; Smith and Shen, 1996). In the CSGB context, size and the sport objective (10) of CSGBs – whether the sport they promote is an Olympic or non-Olympic sport – are crucial because these two criteria are those that authorities refer to when allocating grants. The threshold that splits CSGBs according to their size is 5,000 members. Therefore, large size CSGBs, with > 5,000 members, and/or CSGBs whose sport is an Olympic sport receive more grants than others CSGBs.

Each determinant emphasized may play a crucial role in the achievement of the three strategic goals of CSGBs. Nevertheless, specific determinants might also be key success factors. The aim of this research is to identify and highlight combinations of key performance determinants. Therefore, we formulate the following research question: Which combinations of key determinants are associated with high-performing CSGBs? This creates two main assumptions:

**Assumption 1:** Given contingency factors, combinations of key determinants are crucial for the high performance of CSGBs.

**Assumption 2:** CSGBs which have not acquired one of the combinations of key determinants will not achieve their strategic goals.

In order to analyze the link between the possible key determinants and performance, we use a csQCA. QCA represents one method by which the exploration of the complexity of organizations, such as CSGBs, can be conducted (Kogut and Ragin, 2006). To do so, we first measure the achievement of the strategic goals of the 49 CSGBs in order to distinguish high-performing CSGBs from low-performing ones. In the next step, we assess the determinants that a selection of CSGBs possess. The mixed method design combining assessment, measurement and csQCA is presented in the next section.

3. **Methodology**

3.1 **The QCA approach**

QCA is a configurational comparative approach (Ragin, 1987, 2008). In line with Delery and Doty (1996), Fiss (2007, p. 1180) argues that configurational analysis takes a “systemic and holistic view of organizations, where patterns or profiles rather than individual independent variables are related to an outcome such as performance.”
Furthermore, QCA is relevant for the analysis of more than a handful of cases (from 2-3 up to 50-60 or more). It highlights, according to “causal regularities,” key combinations of necessary and sufficient properties (independent variables called conditions in QCA terminology) leading to a phenomenon (dependent variable called outcome in QCA terminology) (Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). Thus it was appropriate for this research.

3.2 Performance measurement model for CSGBs

The “dependent” variable (outcome) we studied is performance. This refers to whether or not CSGBs were able to achieve their three strategic goals (elite sport, sport for all and customers) in 2005. The year 2005 was chosen because it follows a four-year cycle corresponding to an Olympiad during which the pressure on Olympic SGBs is very high. A quantitative measurement was developed in order to identify high-performing CSGBs. This method was inspired by Madella et al. (2005) who measured the organizational performance of national swimming governing bodies in four Mediterranean countries.

In line with the literature, the model includes eight quantitative performance indicators which together measure the achievement of the strategic objectives of each strategic goal (Table I). The validity of these indicators was considered by a specific group of experts (the Vice-President and the General Secretary of the Belgian Olympic and Interfederal Committee and two Professors of the Louvain School of Management) from sport or management who use performance indicator assessment techniques. The values of the indicators in 2005 were calculated for each of the 49 CSGBs. Data were not available for ten CSGBs for the indicator “sport results in official international competitions.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic goals of CSGBs</th>
<th>Strategic objectives</th>
<th>Quantitative performance indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite sport</td>
<td>To obtain international sport results</td>
<td>Sport results in official international competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To increase athletes’ participation in international competitions</td>
<td>Expenditures for elites per international competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of participation in international competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport for all</td>
<td>To increase sport activities for membership</td>
<td>Number of sport trainers for 1,000 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport services expenditures per membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>To sustain sport values in society</td>
<td>Percentage of the number of membership under 18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increase in the percentage of women membership as compared with the previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To attract members</td>
<td>Increase in the percentage of the number of members as compared with the previous year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: mean of the scores of the strategic objectives; mean of the scores of the quantitative performance indicators

Table I. Determinants of performance in SGBs
According to standard normalization, we obtained a performance score from “0” to “10” for each indicator: the higher score, the more a CSGB performed in comparison with the other CSGBs in 2005. We computed the average performance score for each objective and strategic goal (Table I). Afterwards we highlighted highly performing CSGBs which had a tendency to achieve their strategic goals according to the average performance score of all CSGBs on their three strategic goals. To do so, we computed two complementary clustering methods – hierarchical ascendant classification with the Ward method and $K$-means (nonhierarchical) clustering (Fiss, 2011; Ketchen and Shook, 1996).

3.3 Case selection
In order to analyze the CSGBs in detail, we selected a sample of them covering different sizes, different sport objectives and different levels of performance. This was crucial because we aimed to study a large diversity of CSGBs whose internal functioning differs. Also, we selected a group of cases about which we had good knowledge (Ragin, 2008; Rihoux and Ragin, 2008).

3.4 Assessment of the determinants of CSGBs
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Chair and the administrative manager of each selected CSGB in order to understand their perceptions of their organization, respectively volunteer and paid staff. Content analysis of the interview transcripts was performed to assess the way these CSGBs were operating, according to the potential determinants highlighted (also called conditions here after for csQCA), before the year 2005 (the Olympiad 2000-2004). Afterwards, we were able to analyze the link between (high) performance and potential determinants (key success factors) using csQCA.

3.5 csQCA
The QCA techniques are based upon the matching and contrasting of cases which eliminates negligible conditions (no matter if a condition is present or absent, the phenomenon occurs anyhow) or trivial conditions [a condition is present (or absent) for almost all cases] in order to highlight the minimum necessary and sufficient conditions that can “explain” (non)occurrence of the outcome. This process of reducing, through Boolean or set-theoretic algorithms, complex expressions into shorter combinations of conditions is called “minimization” (Ragin, 2008; Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). Also, two main minimizations can be performed: without or with logical remainders. The latter are the configurations of conditions researchers do not observe as cases because they were limited in their selection or because such cases do not (yet) exist (Ragin, 2004). Thus, they are logically possible configurations of conditions not observed as empirical cases. Consequently, every possible configuration, according to the conditions considered, leading to the outcome can be analyzed. Most of time, the minimizations with logical remainders lead to parsimonious (short) solutions.

In this research we focussed on csQCA (multivalue QCA and fuzzy-set QCA are two other techniques, for more information, see Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). It requires the outcome and the conditions to be dichotomous. Thus, according to the criteria selected, researchers have to argue how they decide to transform their quantitative or qualitative data into dichotomous data. Therefore, we transformed the qualitative data obtained from the assessment of the determinants into numeric data.
(dichotomous: 1/0), thus without neglecting their complexity we could come up with in the analysis. We split CSGBs whose determinants were present (or strong: [1]) from the ones whose determinants were absent (or weak: [0]).

In line with assumption 1, we intended to obtain combinations of key determinants linked with high performance of CSGBs, considered as the achievement of their sport for all, elite sport and customers strategic goals: outcome value [1]. Furthermore, we paid attention to the failure of achievement of one or more strategic goals: outcome value [0]. The aim was to compare high- and low-performance outcomes in order to highlight the key determinants high-performing CSGBs possess in comparison with low-performing ones, in line with assumption 2.

4. Results

According to our case knowledge, our data and the methodological imperative to obtain various types of CSGBs, we selected 18 CSGBs among the 49 CSGBs. These 18 CSGBs have different sizes, sport objectives and levels of performance. Seven CSGBs (athletics, jiu-jitsu, archery, wheelchair sports, petanque, fencing and swimming) are considered to perform relatively highly (Table II). Their outcome value for csQCA is [1]. They show performance scores greater than the mean of all 49 CSGBs and have been included in the same cluster according to the clustering methods performed with all CSGBs. A total of 11 CSGBs are considered to perform relatively lowly (Table II). Their outcome value for csQCA is [0]. Five show very low scores in their strategic goals while six performed relatively lowly on some strategic goals, such as elite sport strategic goal, and high in other(s).

In total, 36 interviews were carried out with one volunteer and one paid staff of each CSGB selected to assess, before 2005, the ten potential determinants. We transformed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSGBs 2005</th>
<th>Customers</th>
<th>Elite sport</th>
<th>Sport for all</th>
<th>Clusters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canoe</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>Low performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scuba diving</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gliding</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Futsal</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>5.59&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>6.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>7.37&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triathlon</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>8.45&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienteering</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>9.44&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>5.85&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>6.44&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handball</td>
<td>6.90&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>6.95&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Petanque</td>
<td>5.28&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.37&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>8.36&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>7.34&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.50&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair sports</td>
<td>6.73&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.16&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>7.38&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.60&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.63&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
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<td>5.86&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jiu-Jitsu</td>
<td>9.00&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.43&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.45&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Performance score of the three strategic goals of the 18 communities’ sport governing bodies (CSGBs) selected in 2005

Notes: CSGBs are identified according to the sport they promote. <sup>a</sup>Performance score greater than the mean: high achievement
this qualitative data into dichotomous data and present it in a data matrix (Table III) showing the configurations of determinants of the cases selected, linked with their performance. Each configuration of conditions from this data matrix, called a “truth table” in QCA terminology, shows only one outcome value (1 or 0). There is no contradictory configuration.

4.1 “Truth table” analysis: configurations of determinants linked with high performance

Eight CSGBs were governed by one or two volunteers (the Chair and/or the General Secretary), without any paid staff being involved in the decision-making processes (CEN{1} and GOV{1} in Table III). Among these, six showed a strong division of labor and supervision of the staff (TOS{1} in Table III). The individual who was in charge of the paid staff was a key factor in their governance. Half of them performed highly: archery, athletics and swimming.

Among them seven CSGBs showed a globally shared vision without any conflict between the volunteers and paid staff (VIS{1} in Table III). The majority of their volunteers were involved in strategic planning and with the employees, they were sharing a same strategy, four showed both external partnerships and the development of innovative activities for their member (EXR{1} and INA{1} in Table III) and two of them performed highly: Fencing and Petanque.

In contrast, 11 CSGBs showed intra-organizational conflict or globally conflicting vision (VIS{0} in Table III). Among these, six had a governance structure not involving paid staff (GOV{1} in Table III) and underdeveloped external partnerships (EXR{0} in Table III),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases 2005</th>
<th>CEN</th>
<th>GOV</th>
<th>TOS</th>
<th>VIS</th>
<th>EXR</th>
<th>INA</th>
<th>ETS</th>
<th>FIN</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>SPORT</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jiu-Jitsu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery</td>
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</table>

**Table III.** “Truth table” for the 18 communities’ sport governing bodies selected

**Notes:** CEN, centralization; GOV, governance of volunteer(s); TOS, task oriented and supervision; VIS, vision; EXR, external relations; INA, innovative activities; ETS, elite training structure; FIN, financial independence; VLM, volunteer management; SIZE, size; SPORT, sport objectives; OUTCOME, achievement of the strategic goals. The coordination dichotomies are all coded in the same direction with a score of 1 signaling the presence (high or strong) of the condition and a score of 0 signaling the absence (low or weak) of the condition.
partially due to a lack of financial and human resources. Nevertheless, half of them performed highly: Archery, Ju-Jitsu and Wheelchair sports.

Only four CSGBs organized programs to attract and to develop talent. This points out the great weaknesses of CSGBs in elite support as they are Olympic oriented (SPORT1 in Table III). Among them three of them performed highly: athletics, fencing and swimming.

A total of seven CSGBs were somewhat financially independent from public funds (FIN1 in Table III), although no CSGB received appropriate resources from sponsorship, five of them had > 5,000 members (SIZE1 in Table III) whereas eight of the ten small size CSGBs were somewhat financially dependent. This shows the strong link between size and financial dependence upon authorities. Indeed, CSGBs have difficulties in attracting resources other than public resources.

4.2 QCA analysis: combinations of key determinants linked with high performance

We computed the minimizations with logical remainders[2] with the software Torsmana 1.3 for the ten determinants highlighted through the literature which were assessed for the 18 cases selected. A total of five key determinants linked with high performance emerged: innovative activities [INA], elite training structure [ETS], centralization [CEN], governance of volunteer(s) [GOV] and size [SIZE]. Arguably they are sufficient, according to our selected cases, to “explain” the performance of CSGBs. Indeed, the “truth table” utilizing only these five key conditions showed no contradictory configuration (Table IV). However, we did not neglect the fact that the CSGBs have several others conditions affecting their internal functioning. We consider this further in the discussion.

Furthermore, according to Marx (2005), in order to obtain a (theoretically) valid model, the ratio between the number of variables (conditions + outcome) and the number of cases has to be limited to 0.33 or less. With 18 CSGBs, a maximum of six variables (five conditions and one outcome) can be analyzed. So we continued with the five key determinants highlighted. The 18 CSGBs corresponded to 12 configurations of conditions (Table IV).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities’ sport governing bodies</th>
<th>CEN</th>
<th>GOV</th>
<th>INA</th>
<th>ETS</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics, swimming</td>
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</table>

| Notes: CEN centralization; GOV, governance of volunteer(s); ETS, elite training structure; INA, innovative activities; SIZE, size; OUTCOME, achievement of the strategic goals. The coordination dichotomies are all coded in the same direction with a score of “1” signaling the presence (high or strong) of the condition and a score of “0” signaling the absence (low or weak) of the condition. |
Figure 1 represents solutions for high and low performance resulting from minimizations with logical remainders[3]. The determinants, expressed by their symbol, are followed by the values {1} or {0} according to the dichotomization. Basic logical operators are used to express the connections between the conditions. The [*] (multiplication) symbol represents the logical “AND.” The [+] (addition) symbol represents the logical “OR.” Finally, the arrow symbol [→] represents the link (usually causal) between the combinations of determinants and performance.

The solution of the minimization for high performance can be read as follows: the outcome value [1], high attainment of the three strategic goals of CSGBs (sport for all, elite sport and customers) is observed.

In CSGBs that combine innovative activities [INA{1}] AND present an elite training structure [ETS {1}] OR governance of volunteer(s) and paid staff [GOV{0}] AND innovative activities [INA{1}] AND large size [SIZE {1}] OR centralization [CEN {1}] AND governance of volunteer(s) [GOV {1}] AND small size [SIZE {0}].

These solutions answer the research question and so support assumption 1. It highlights three combinations of key success factors that are linked with high performance. It shows that CSGBs which develop innovative activities for their members and an elite training structure to detect talent (1) might achieve their strategic goals, as well as large-sized CSGBs which develop innovative activities and are governed by volunteers with the involvement of paid staff (2), and small-sized CSGBs which are governed by one or two volunteers (3).

Afterwards, consistent with the assumption 2, we analyzed the solution for low performance. The combinations of determinants linked with low performance could not be observed in high performance. The solution of the minimization for low performance can be read as follows: the outcome value [0], low achievement of the three strategic goals of CSGBs (sport for all, elite sport and customers) is observed: in CSGBs that combine weak innovative activities [INA {0}] AND large size [SIZE {1}] OR weak centralization [CEN {0}] AND governance of volunteer(s) [GOV {1}] AND an absence of an elite training structure [ETS {0}] OR governance of volunteer(s) and paid staff [GOV {0}] AND absent elite training structure [ETS {0}] AND small size [SIZE {0}].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome 1: High performance</th>
<th>Outcome 0: Low performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INA{1} * ETS{1} + GOV{0} * INA{1} * SIZE{1} + CEN{1} * GOV{1} * SIZE{0}</td>
<td>INA{0} * SIZE{1} + CEN{0} * GOV{1} * ETS{0} + GOU{0} * ETS{0} * SIZE{0}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Petanque, Jiu-Jitsu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Archery, Wheelchair sports</td>
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<td>Fencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Canoe, Handball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Futsal</td>
<td>Rugby, Triathlon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Gliding, Orienteering</td>
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<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Scuba Diving</td>
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<td>Gymnastics</td>
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</table>

Note: The [*] (multiplication) symbol represents the logical “AND”; the [+] (addition) symbol represents the logical “OR”; the arrow symbol [→] represents the link (usually causal) between the combinations of conditions and outcome.

The coordination dichotomies are all coded in the same direction with a score of 1 signaling the presence (high or strong) of the condition and a score of 0 signaling the absence (low or weak) of the condition.

CEN, centralization; INA, innovative activities; GOV, governance of volunteer(s); ETS, elite training structure; SIZE, size; OUTCOME, achievement of the strategic goals.
These parsimonious formulas support assumption 2. They show combinations of determinants leading to low performance which differ from the ones leading to high performance. Large-sized CSGBs which do not invest in innovative activities might perform lowly, as well as CSGBs in which governance does not involve paid staff and that do not invest in an elite training structure and small-sized CSGBs combining an absence of an elite training structure but includes the governance of volunteers and paid staff.

The solutions for high and low performance do not overlap. Therefore, this csQCA leads to theoretically valid results (Rihoux and Ragin, 2008). Furthermore, according to Marx (2005), our model combining one outcome value (high performance), five key determinants and 18 CSGBs is theoretically valid (ratio 6/18 = 0.33).

5. Discussion
Three generic combinations of key determinants linked with high performance in SGBs have been highlighted. However, although these key determinants are crucial factors for performance, they may need specific conditions which are not crucial to help “explain” or understand high performance. We argue that these conditions – task orientation and supervision, vision, external relations, financial independence and sport orientation – could play a role in the presence of key determinants.

The first combination refers to services SGBs can provide to their members, including elite. In line with Slack and Parent (2006), governing bodies could reach their strategic objectives when delivering new and different activities to satisfy their members, while at the same time providing the necessary services to develop elite performance. Both of these key determinants were suggested by Madella et al. (2005). Nevertheless, as Shilbury and Moore (2006) and Winand et al. (2010) underline, priorities in sport for all and elite objectives might compete. This is concerned with the financial investment choices SGBs have to make when allocating finances. Athletics, swimming and fencing illustrate this first combination of an elite training structure and innovative activities that leads them to high performance. They develop systems to detect talent and to improve their skills while at the same time providing new sport services to satisfy their membership, such as organized active leisure in athletics. The first two are large sized and the three of them are Olympic oriented. Therefore, due to their sport specificities, they receive large financial support from authorities which makes them financially dependent upon public funds. They all have sufficient revenue to invest in both services for members and elite. Moreover, they could also invest in external relations to increase membership.

The second combination refers to the governance of large-sized CSGBs and the development of their activities to satisfy their membership. Bayle (1999) and Glisson and Martin (1980) underlined the crucial role paid staff fulfill in the decision-making processes. We also add the necessary experience these paid staff should have in order to lead their organization to success. Furthermore, the role of staff is to advise their organization on how to develop innovative activities for membership. Petanque illustrates this combination of large size, involvement of paid staff and the development of innovative activities. Its two employees have a lengthy experience of 15 and 21 years. Consequently, the knowledge they have about the organization is often greater than the knowledge of the board. The reduced formalism underlined by Zintz and Camy (2005) in these SGBs and the experience staff of Petanque argue in favor of the decentralization management underlined by Schmid (2002), which includes several key factors, including the paid staff. The paid staff organize themselves under the supervision of a volunteer. This trust between volunteers and paid staff results in a
shared vision leading to the development of innovative services to attract members. These innovations to satisfy and attract members seem to be particularly relevant for large-sized CSGBs as is illustrated by four low-performing large-sized CSGBs (basketball, futsal, shooting, gymnastics). Nonetheless, two of these, basketball and gymnastics, due to the fact that their sport is very well known, have no real trouble in attracting membership. However, the lack of new sport activities they provide to membership could lead to some difficulty in retaining them.

The third combination refers to the governance of small-sized CSGBs. In contrast to the first two combinations, CSGBs illustrating this one have weak financial resources, but they nonetheless achieve their strategic goals, contrasting with the arguments of Brown (2005) and Smith and Shen (1996). As Bayle (1999) concluded, the presence of a leader could have an effect on performance and this might be true for (very) small SGBs. Jiu-Jitsu, Archery and Wheelchair sports illustrate this third combination of small size and governance led by one (or two) key volunteer(s). Due to their sport specificities, they do not attract a lot of members. Therefore, their financial and human resources are weak. They are not able to invest in an elite structure and/or innovative activities. However, they rely on devotee volunteer(s) and delegate activities they are not able to deliver to their sport clubs. These small-sized CSGBs are governed by one or two leaders who are able to lead the whole organization in spite of some conflict. This would not be possible in a large-sized CSGB without effective processes for dealing with these conflicts.

Although we have highlighted that small-sized CSGBs which have no elite training structure and a governance mix of volunteers and paid staff might perform lowly (handball, triathlon, orienteering), we need to qualify this result. Indeed, the three CSGBs we refer to perform highly in the sport for all strategic goal and lowly in the elite sport strategic goal, primarily due to a weak elite structure. Therefore, the involvement of experienced paid staff in the decision-making processes is advised, no matter the size of a CSGB, even if volunteer leaders can easily manage small CSGBs.

6. Conclusion and implications
Based on the nonprofit organization and SGB literature, we have highlighted ten possible success factors related to high performance of SGBs. We have measured the achievement of the strategic goals of the 49 French-speaking community sport governing bodies in Belgium (CSGBs) and select 18 of them in order to assess possible key success factors. Using csQCA through a mixed method design, five key success factors have emerged. They are connected in three different combinations which are observed in highly performing CSGBs:

(1) innovative activities and an elite training structure;
(2) large size, innovative activities and a governance mix of volunteer(s) and paid staff; and
(3) small size and governance by one or two volunteers.

The services CSGBs are able to provide to their members and elite are considered crucial to performing highly, particularly for large-sized CSGBs. However, not all CSGBs have the opportunity to provide many services, because these need large human and financial resources. The combination of size and the governance of CSGBs has also been highlighted as critical. Depending on their size and the experience of paid staff, CSGBs should either focus on a shared vision or rely on leader. Large-sized
CSGBs could involve experienced paid staff in their decision-making processes and develop innovative activities, while small-sized CSGBs could delegate activities they cannot afford. One leader of the latter may be sufficient to manage them, but we would not advise this configuration for large-sized CSGBs.

6.1 Managerial implications and implications for further research
Our study offers several implications for SGBs' managers who want to manage their organizations according to financial and human resources. SGBs which have experienced staff and large or sufficient financial resources should be proactive. They should adapt their services to membership and develop elite structures or involve paid staff in the decision-making processes. Satisfaction of membership through the development of innovative sport services is seen as crucial to performing highly. Also, SGBs which have financial difficulties and/or no experienced staff should invest in specific activities and rely on the experience and charisma of their volunteer(s), as well as supporting their sport clubs to develop elite structures and innovative activities. The presence of a leader is important for small-sized organizations whereas the involvement of experienced staff in decision-making processes either by providing advice or taking part in decision making is seen as beneficial no matter what the size.

The results of this study suggest that researchers should analyze combinations of factors leading to performance and not only the net effects of variables. Indeed, to be close to organizational reality, we need to take into account the way factors affect each other in order to produce results. These factors are often interconnected. Their presence (or absence) might lead to different results according to the factors with which they are combined. We argue that it is particularly relevant in the nonprofit sport organization context, due to the complexity of these organizations – combining volunteers and paid staff, multiple strategic goals, mixed financing – which demands complex explanations.

6.2 Limitations
There are methodological limitations to consider in this research. First, not all the 49 CSGBs have been analyzed in this research. This was so that in-depth interviews could be conducted. Second, every solution emerging from QCA has to be carefully interpreted. Even if this csQCA has highlighted five key determinants linked with high performance, the other determinants should not be neglected because they are part of the internal functioning of each CSGB. Third, some CSGBs included in the ones presenting an outcome value [0], have achieved one or two of their three strategic goals. As a result, in order to strengthen the research, the precise strategic goals (elite sport, sport for all and customers) should be analyzed one by one, according to the framework developed in this study.

In spite of such limitations, QCA has proven to be an adequate method to tackle the “black box” of CSGBs. The key success factors leading to high performance could be identified using csQCA. Indeed, the complex relationships between actions and results can be highlighted, as well as the interactions between actions, as a consequence of the focus on combinations of necessary and sufficient conditions of the QCA.

Notes
1. An 11th potential determinant has been highlighted from literature. It refers to volunteer management. Nevertheless, CSGBs take no active role in recruiting and retaining their volunteers within their board. Consequently, we choose to reject it from the further analysis. It cannot be part of the key success factor (Ragin, 2008; Rihoux and Ragin, 2008).
2. We do not show the minimization of the outcome value \([1]\) without logical remainders because it does not go much beyond the observed CSGBs which achieve their strategic goals, it is called a descriptive formula such as the data matrix (truth table) is.

3. Solutions for high and low performance in figure 1 result from a second step csQCA analysis. Indeed, the first csQCA with logical remainders of both high and low (outcome \([1]\) and \([0]\)) performance has shown one contradictory simplifying assumption. One logical remainder was used both in the minimization of the outcome values \([1]\) and \([0]\). To solve this contradiction, outcome value \([1]\) has been assigned to this logical remainder because it shows present elite training structure and innovative activities which have been identified such as crucial for CSGBs to perform high. The latter is called a fictive case which was included in the following minimizations to obtain theoretically valid results (Rihoux and Ragin, 2008).

References


Further reading


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