

## THE ROLE OF MARKETING RESEARCH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

*Amelichin Ecaterina<sup>1</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>State University of Physical Education and Sport, Republic of Moldova*

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### **Abstract**

Marketing research can be considered the start point in the marketing endeavor of any sports entity in our country. The results of marketing research emphasize the need of adaptation and implementation of some development politics of sports entity, of a more efficient sports politics. Strategies supposed to prevent sport activities abandon are based on an operational informing marketing system that assumes individual knowledge of member clubs or supporters. The necessity of coherence knowledge at the entire communication of sports organization imposes registration of promotional programs of sports services within the organization global communication program. Adoption of communication forms through sport, on a wide scale must be done in a constant and urgent way. So, the right knowledge of the content, efficient ways of communication through sports, of new tools, as well as the using of the combination between the new methods of communication with the classic ones, including the modern means of communication, can contribute to a selection of a viable alternative for the sustainable future of sports organization.

### **Research actuality**

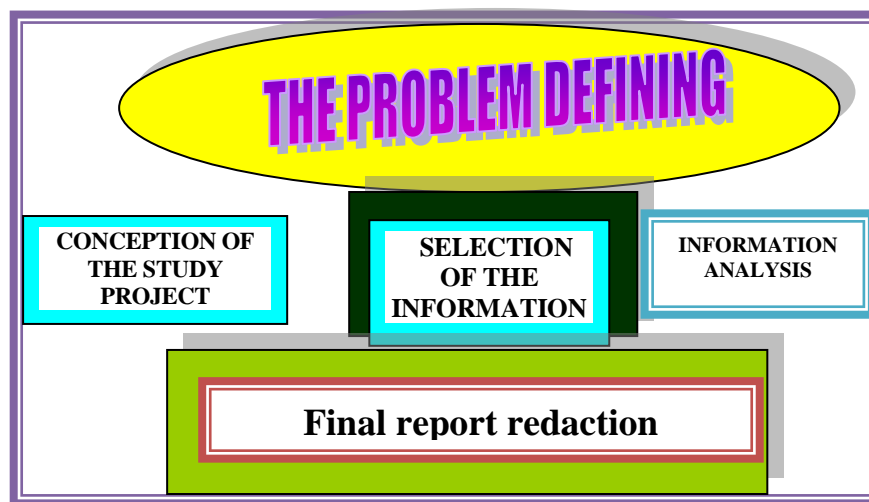
In contemporary society sports organizations feel competitiveness of the medium, so that all rivalry forms lead to a significant growth of marketing role. Sports marketing contribute to the balance retrieve between sports organization benefit and the ones of participant at sports. Competition between sports organization stimulates adoption of some market strategies that sight out difference of products/services offered by a certain club, federation etc., attraction of a bigger number of members and increasing their loyalty by offering quality services [1].

International sports developments in recent years, as well as theoretical and practical concerns in the management of sports activity

indicates its direction, both by internal (national) but also to regional and global levels. Thus, sport organization must have all the powers of a body able to cope with an economy based on a balanced report and financial components in order to resist on the competitive market and for a sustainable development [1].

Furthermore the level of customer satisfaction, determines in direct way a steady development of sports organization, if this continues to consume the sport product or to use the sports reference services. Marketing research is a complex activity which involves the achievement of a well-defined route, route that includes the following steps: defining the problem; project design study; collection of information; analysis of obtained and available information; the final report of the research (Figure 1) [2].

With the help of quantitative marketing research sports organizations can determine representative parameters that determine the level of athletes (customers) satisfaction in terms of quality sports services rendered, of price (if applicable), the desire to continue or not to consume a product or service of this kind. Upon request, the service will include a specific index, which indicates the extent to which existing customers are willing to become sports ambassadors product or service, namely to recommend it to friends and acquaintances [2].



*Fig.1. The route of a marketing research*

Through constant monitoring of customer satisfaction and their willingness to recommend the product to others it can be measured the effectiveness of the marketing policies of the organization and can

predicted the future behavior and attitudes of consumers on products and services researched. Therewith, marketing research is a mean of defining new products or redefines existing ones at the sports organizations level in order to adapt it to the requirements of sports consumers, and also a way through which is chosen the best strategy development or marketing tactic. [3]

**The purpose of research** is the reflection of the significant role of marketing research in the sustainable development of sports organization. The study was conducted by the organization of two focus groups, one with superior managers of national sports organizations (private sports clubs and national sports federations) and second with middle managers representatives or lower education institutions from pre-university profile (sports lyceums from Chisinau).

Focus groups were carried out during the study year 2014-2015, being analyzed and interpreted in the laboratory of the chair of Physical Culture Management, Faculty of Sport, SUPES, Chisinau. The two groups were made up of a number of homogeneous people. The group discussions were focused on the following themes:

- organization of marketing activities and marketing/promotion communication place in the marketing activities of sports organization;
- marketing research objectives and items that are highlighted by the organization within marketing communication;
- marketing research role in communication policy foundation at the institutional level;
- communication tools used and their using influence on sustainable development of sports organization.

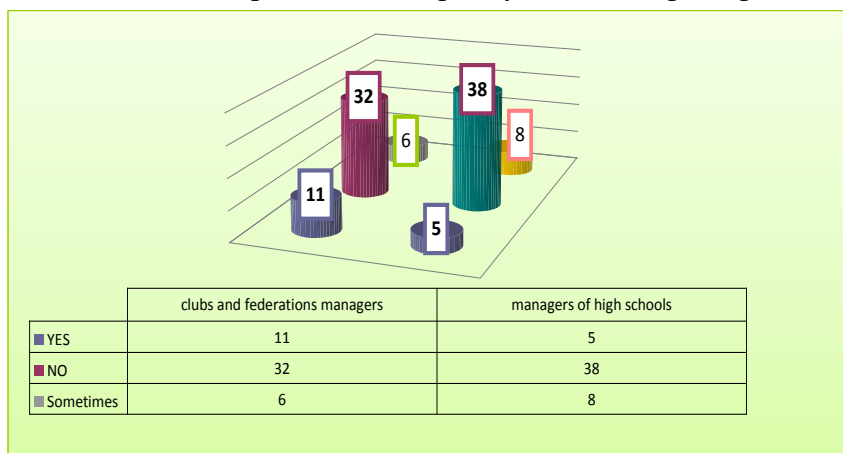
**The methods used in the research:** literature review, interview, interpretation and generalization of data; observation and graphical method.

### **Results and discussions.**

The use of marketing research is a method that not all of the organizations interviewed have admitted that they have used in the development strategy using as motivation one or more of the following objectives: launch / revival of products / new sports services; the opening of new offices / branches / outlets; achieve professional results or financial etc. Figure 2 reflects the data from the two focus groups by interpreting the responses given to the question "Do you use the

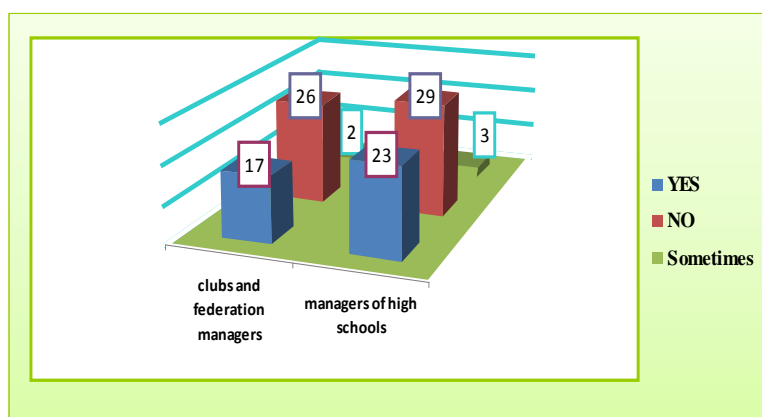
marketing research as sustainable development strategy of the organization you lead?"

Most of the interviewees gave negative responses, arguing that they do not dispose within the organizational structure of the institution of a specialized marketing and respectively specialists who could perform such studies, having as consequences the formulation of proposals towards continuous improvement of quality services / sports products.



*Fig. 2. The answers regarding the use of marketing research*

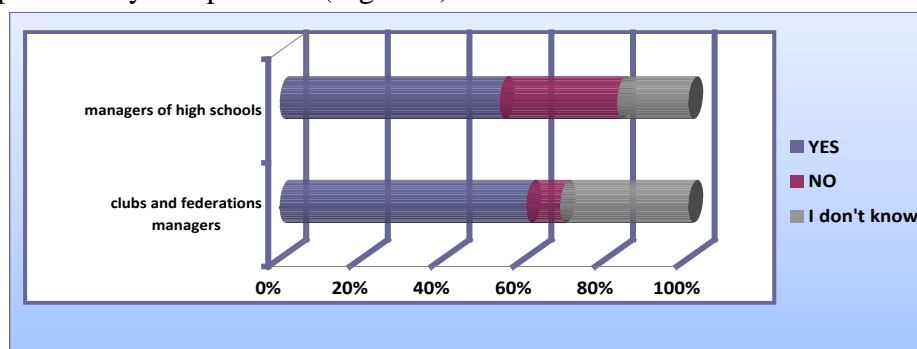
Regarding the client information acquisition, towards the market, competition, the products image or the reference sports organization, the majority of respondents declared that they do not carry on such kind of activities. Among the activities that are on the basis of communication strategy elaboration, the next ones have emerged as being prevalingly realized within its own organizations: the elaboration of the development and communication strategy; the SWOT research for the identification of the opportunities, assaults, strong points and the weak ones that can influence the efficiency of the monitored sports institution (Figure 3).



*Fig. 3. The answers regarding the client information acquisition towards the market, competition, products image or the sports organization*

**Deciding** towards the communication policy, in sport is imposed from the part of sports organizations managers to find answers to some questions[4] referring to: who consumes the sports organization product/service? Who decides to buy the sports product/ service, family, friends or the consumer himself? what kind of advantages does the consumer search (entertainment, fitness, pleasure, socialization, maintenance, health recovery and recuperation)? Where do the consumers find information regarding the sports product/service? Why do the clients buy the products of the reference sports organization?

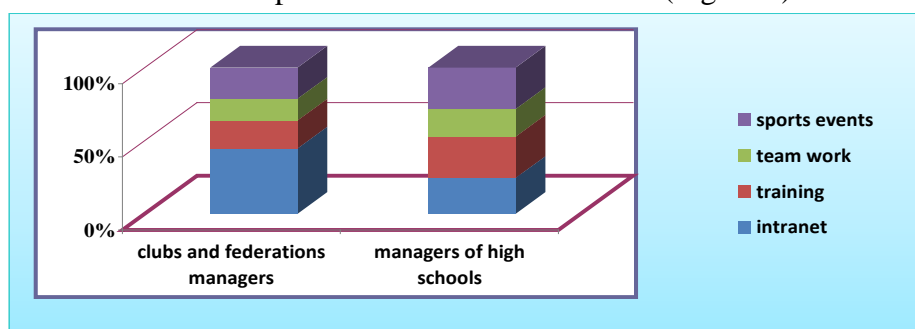
Asked if these answers can make the subject of some marketing researches, that could bring a set of important information towards the market general data, concerning data to the individual consumers and competition, the majority of respondents stated positively in a percentage of 56 %, negatively -19 %, but 24 % mentioned that they do not know particularly this problem (Figure 4).



*Fig. 4. The answers regarding the subject of some marketing researches specific to sports organizations*

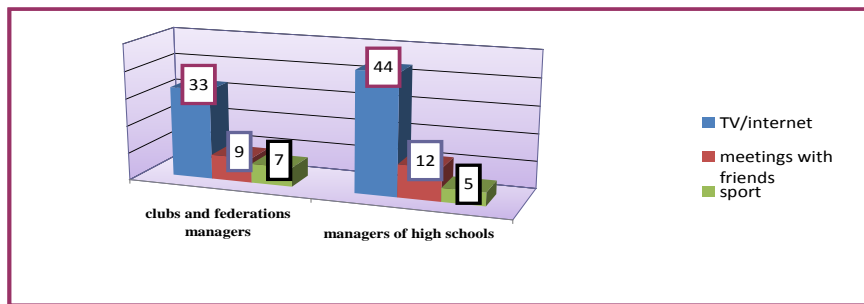
Because for a lasting development of the sports organization, the external communication is not all, we wanted to know if within the interviewed institutions exist the internal communication concept, which are its goals, methods of its realization, as well as if there is a department in whose duties these obligations belong. From the received answers results that through the most important goals of the internal communication are: the team enthusiasm stimulation, the creation of a favorable internal climate, the staff information regarding the working way and the organization current activities, the building and consolidation of the organizational culture, the employees mobility, because these ones to become more efficient, the staff information before emitting the messages outside or the prevention of social conflicts.

In this context through the most often used methods for the realization of goals of internal communication are the intranet, training or the team-building, but also it were recalled and the other as well as the internal events, the list of internal discussions or sports events. The obligation of internal communication belongs most of the times to the Human Resources department or the administrative office, but were recalled also some departments of Public Relations (Figure 5).



*Fig. 5. The answers regarding the subject of some marketing researches specific to the sports organizations*

At the end of the discussions, we wanted to know the participants' view regarding the weighting of sports activities due to the sports field (represented by the manager of sports organization) in the modalities of spending the free time in weekend by young clients or athletes. In this context we can reflect that in weekend, although the main activity of free time remains the viewing of TV programs or the internet (67%), followed by the meetings with friends and colleagues (21%), the sport remains however at the end of the classification (12%) - Figure 6.



*Fig. 6. The weighting of sports activities due to the sports field in the modalities of spending the free time*

In conclusion we can assert that the marketing research has a significant role in the formulation of some basic principles that are on the basis of lasting development of the sports organization, but the responsibility of research problematical determination belongs to the deciders, but often this activity belongs to the researches task. At the same time, the marketing research helps in this way to the identification of opportunities and assaults regarding the sports organization activity and the environment where this one extends its activity.

A sports entity with a marketing orientation can not develop its activity in ordinary conditions if it does not have a sufficient amount of information. The complexity and dynamics that characterize the information domain need a rigorous tackling of the acquisition, inventory, evaluation and their analysis. To answer at this requirement, the marketing supports the sports organization with a specific instrument: the marketing researches.

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## ROLUL CERCETĂRII DE MARKETING ÎN DEZVOLTAREA DURABILĂ A ORGANIZAȚIILOR SPORTIVE

*Amelichin Ecaterina<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Universitatea de Stat de Educație Fizică și Sport, Republica Moldova*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** cercetare de marketing, organizație sportivă, dezvoltare, strategie de comunicare.

### **Rezumat**

Cercetările de marketing pot fi considerate punctul de pornire în demersul de marketing al oricărei entități sportive din țara noastră. Rezultatele cercetării de marketing relevă necesitatea adoptării și implementării unor politici de dezvoltare a entității sportive, a unei politici de comunicare mai eficiente a acesteia. Strategiile destinate să prevină abandonul activităților sportive se bazează pe un sistem operațional de informații de marketing care presupune cunoașterea individuală a membrilor clubului sau suporterilor. Necesitatea coerenței mesajelor la nivelul întregii comunicații a organizației sportive impune înscrierea programelor de promovare a serviciilor sportive în programul comunicațional global al organizației. Adoptarea formelor de comunicare prin sport, pe scară extinsă trebuie să se facă în mod constant și urgent.

Astfel, cunoașterea corectă a conținutului, modalităților eficiente de comunicare prin sport, a efectelor noilor instrumente, precum utilizarea în combinație a celor mai noi metode de comunicare în combinație cu cele clasice, inclusiv și cu mijloacele comunicaționale moderne, pot contribui la selectarea unei alternative viabile pentru viitorul sustenabil al organizației sportive.