Strategic Planning in the Sport Sector

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Abstract

The contribution of strategic planning in the financial favorable outcomes has been recognized by the business sector. The sport sector has begun to recognize the value of strategic planning as well. Many sport researchers have claimed that without the betterment of strategic planning activities, sport will not survive to the turbulent and competitive environment of the sport industry. The core problem of strategic planning is understanding its multi-faceted character and interrelating different aspects of the strategic planning development. The purposes of this study were to: (a) examine the strategic planning process, and (b) describe a strategic planning process for the sport sector and analyze its various elements. If the sport managers follow the proposed strategic planning process, they will be able to deal with the intricate sport business environment and deliver high economic profits.

Keywords: Strategic management, Strategic planning, Sport strategic planning, Sport business, Intercollegiate and University Sports
Introduction

Strategic planning embodies concepts from competitive strategy, history, business practices, and organizational theory (Alison & Kaye, 2005). According to the literature an organization engaged in strategic planning may both specify where it wants to be and manage the changes (Bryson & Alston, 2005).

Sport industry as well as its affiliated industries, i.e. sports tourism (Vrondou, Kriemadis, & Kartakoullis, 2009), intercollegiate and university sports (i.e. Kriemadis, 1997; Krotee & Bucher, 2007; Earle, 2009; Barr, 2009), involve the establishment of techniques and strategies present in the greater part of contemporary business, government, and non-profit organizations (Hoye, Smith, Nicholson, Stewart, & Westerbeek, 2009). Higher education institutions’ athletic departments face the same challenges as do universities. Demands are higher than ever, and responsibilities are greater than previously (Wickstrom, 2006). Constantly changing legislation, rules and regulations; financial concerns; human resources issues; recruitment of student – athletes are some of the challenges that prevail in the twenty-first century (Wickstrom, 2006).

National university sports organizations, being the authority representing the respective athletic departments of academic institutions, reflect the core principles of sports and development. Above all, a university sport organization is a multifaceted interdependent network which comprises several key players such as institutional bodies, authorities, stakeholders and shareholders, and interacts with society. Social progress and economic prosperity are an integral part of the actions and interactions of existing and future organizations. If university sports organizations are to be effective and viable, they must plan their actions, analyze the environment they compete in, develop strategies to meet their mission and objectives, and periodically evaluate their progress and performance. Strategic planning may be a visual path that illustrates the means, the motive, and the knowledge needed to reach organizational excellence. The literature sets the following profits regarding the application of strategic planning:

- Creation of progressive thinking in order to create effective strategies (Poister & Streib, 2005; Gunn & Williams, 2007).
- Effective organizational response to emerging situations (Kriemadis, 1997).
- Development of strategic thinking, initiative, innovation, creativity and flexibility, improved decision making, benefit the people involved and enhanced organizational and societal effectiveness (Bryson, 2004).
- Superior performance, increase organization’s effectiveness and efficiency (Porter, 2008).
• Formulation of integration, communication, participation, involvement, continuous improvement, cultural change and excellence (Jarzabkowski & Balogun, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to: (a) examine the strategic planning process importance and contribution to the effective management and operation of University Sports Organizations and (b) describe a strategic planning process for the sport sector and analyze its various elements, which top management of sport businesses and organizations may implement so that their goals are realized and their further development and viability is ensured.

Research Methodology

There was systematic and analytical literature review in the broader area of development and strategic planning aiming at collecting theoretical and practical data which relate to the research purpose so that to be used by theorists and sport professionals.

Literature Review

Strategic Planning in Intercollegiate and University Sports

Intercollegiate and university sports, typically constitute the athletic departments of higher education institutions. University sports organizations that enable participation and competition in national, regional, interregional, and international level, establish the status and regulations and support the alignment of all the athletic departments of higher education institutions, are the respective institutional bodies of each country (www.fisu.net). Just as governmental and non-profit organizations have engaged in strategic planning, higher education and their athletic departments have initiated strategic planning or some planning activities towards a more comprehensive effort to achieve their goals and objectives (Earle, 2009).

Krotee and Bucher (2007) argued that many junior colleges, colleges, universities, and institutions, emphasize aspects such as “developing excellence in sports competition, providing a program that is financially self-sufficient, establishing a leadership position in sports among peer institutions, satisfying needs of the spectators, athletes-alumni, community, and coaches and providing sports programs
for the gifted student-athletes” (pp.41). Wickstrom (2006) argued that in order to avoid reducing programs, universities’ athletic departments need to “obtain additional resources from the institution”, “increase operating revenue”, “increase fundraising” and/or “cut expenses”. Athletic departments are accountable not only for managing financial issues, but also for governing all their operations (Wickstrom, 2006). These aspects reinforce the assumption that sports organizations need to adopt several management techniques and clearly understand the “unique features” of sports. In the recent literature, limited comprehensive research has been conducted for strategic planning in the sports sector.

Earle (2009) conducted a research study about strategic planning in Division I-A (Football Bowl Subdivision) athletic departments, and their use of strategic planning as a management tool. This research indicated that 75% of Division I-A athletic departments’ strategic plans cover a five year period, while 80,6% engaged in strategic planning. Furthermore, 97% stated that they have a mission statement; 65,7% a vision statement; 98,1% goals and objectives; 94,4% written values; and 64,8% stated that they had proceeded to environmental scanning. However, Earle (2009) identified that athletic departments and the intercollegiate athletics industry are usually driven by the next event. Additionally, this author emphasized that a long-term perspective enables the achievement of goals and objectives. Earle (2009) asserted that more comprehensive research is needed to reveal information about both the nature and time-frame of short-term objectives and strategies, other than focusing only on funding allocations and budgeting.

Moreover, in another study which conducted in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I-A, the results revealed that although more than 80% of the athletic departments indicated that they were involved in strategic planning activities (i.e. vision, mission, goals and objectives, long-term and short-term strategies, and evaluation procedures), only 43,4% were identified as “strategic planners” and 56,6% were identified as “non-strategic planners” (Kriemadis, 1997). More specifically, Kriemadis (1992, 1997, 2009) identified the appropriate criteria in order to determine what strategic planning is, such as the development of long-range written plans, the assessment of the organization’s internal and external environment and the establishment of strategies based on the organizational mission and objectives. Notwithstanding the above, Kriemadis (1992, 1997) argued that it is essential to further assess the actual implementation of a strategic plan when committing athletic departments’ resources to achieve desired objectives.

The literature has revealed strategic planning models to be implemented in the sport sector. Kriemadis and Theakou (2007), based on the related literature identified the integration of various strategic planning models in public and non-profit organizations, that may be deployed in the sport sector. The researchers conducted a study that examined the strategic planning process developed by a non-profit sport organization in British Columbia, Canada. These authors acknowl-
edged models such as “basic” strategic planning, “issue or goal-based” strategic planning, alignment (ensuring the alignment among organization’s mission and its resources), scenario planning, and organic planning (which demands that values be shared and there is constant review of the systems processes). The study acknowledged that the sports organization developed its own strategic planning model based mainly on the “basic” strategic planning and the “issue or goal-based” model, taking into account their processes and activities. The researchers suggested that sports organizations may develop their own strategic planning model through the selection and integration of various models aligned with organization’s unique needs. However, they pointed out that an organization can combine scenario planning with most models, in order to enable strategic thinking and identify strategic issues and goals (Kriemadis & Theakou, 2007).

The Strategic Planning Process for the Sport Sector

In the following pages, the authors describe the strategic planning process, which may be applicable to the sport sector. According to the literature, in order for the strategic planning process to be effective, three general and integral stages are identified. The first stage is strategy formulation, the second stage refers to strategy implementation and the final stage concerns strategy evaluation (Kriemadis, 1992, 1997; Bryson & Alston, 2005; Allison & Kaye, 2005; Acur & Englyst, 2006; Slater, Olson, & Hult, 2006; Plant, 2009).

![Figure 1: Strategic planning process model (Source: Kriemadis, 1997).](image-url)
Strategy Formulation

As stated in the related literature the culture, values, policies, vision, mission, and long-term objectives of the organization are vital in the strategic planning process. Oakland (2001) argued that achieving world-class performance improves competitiveness and effectiveness. The organizations become more flexible throughout planning process. For this to occur, responsibility for commitment to organizational excellence must be accepted. “Total organizational excellence will influence the culture and provide a vision framework comprising its philosophy, core values and beliefs, a purpose and a mission” (pp.5).

Organization’s culture. Culture is a fascinating concept that has a powerful force on all stakeholders in the strategic planning process and in the international business environment. For this reason individuals and sport organizations must integrate cultural awareness and skills into their relations, strategies and structures (Katsioloudes, 2002). Moreover, the culture incorporates the beliefs which encompass the sport organization about how business should perform and how employees should behave and perform towards the common goals and objectives, as well as how they should be treated (Oakland, 2001). Shared values and beliefs which can lead to the development of norms and rules of behavior are dimensions of a sport organization’s culture (Mello & Stank, 2005). Specifically, the dimensions of organizational culture may influence the level and the frequency of creativity and inspire the unfettered flow of new ideas (Alves, Marques, Saur, & Marques, 2007). More significantly, new perspectives such as learning and growth (i.e. expand and build strategic skill and expertise, develop leadership and execution-driven culture, enable and require continuous learning and sharing of knowledge) that Kaplan and Norton (2008) identified, may create a high-performance culture.

Core values and beliefs. The core values and beliefs may be viewed as the sport organization’s basic principles about what is important in business, its conduct, its social responsibility and its response to changes in the environment. These core values and beliefs should be incorporated into a mission; defining who the sport organization wants to be (Oakland, 2001); and therefore set the sport organization’s fundamental guidelines (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Also, the values stipulate the attitude, behavior, and character of a sport organization; and can be viewed as the path that will guide sport organization’s actions (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Moreover, the core values and beliefs should be regarded as guiding forces, which focus on employees, suppliers, costumers, society as a whole, safety, shareholders and stakeholders in general (Oakland, 2001). Effective leadership provides a framework where core values and clear beliefs are integrated to accomplish sport organization’s mission, common goals and objectives (Oakland, 2001). Finally, a value statement should focus on key values given that people will usually focus
only on these values, must be shared with everyone and further discussed (Brinckerhoff, 2009). It is imperative that staff input should be acknowledged periodically. Value statements should be judged on their implications, and not simply on our self-interest (Brinckerhoff, 2009). A written statement of organizational values may facilitate stakeholders’ commitment and create alliances between individuals and sport organizations (Allison & Kaye, 2005). A value statement defines how a sport organization may perform (Bryson & Alston, 2005).

**Policies.** The policy reflects management’s attitude (Chin, Chan, & Lam, 2008). A chief executive of a sport organization should take on the responsibility and commitment to an accepted policy. Policies generate responsibilities for interactions between all the functions, and thus need to be communicated to all employees at all levels and departments (Oakland, 2001). Every sport organization, in order to achieve performance excellence should define its policy on quality and enable continuing improvement. A set of requirements furthered by the top management has been identified (Oakland, 2001):

a) establish a “sport organization”;
b) identify the customer;
c) identify the customer’s needs and perception of needs;
d) assess the ability of the sport organization to meet these needs economically;
e) ensure that acquired materials and services reliably meet the required standards of performance and efficiency;
f) concentrate on a philosophy of prevention rather than detection of problems;
g) educate and train for improvement; and
h) review the management systems to maintain progress.

**Vision.** The vision stretches many years into the future (Allison & Kaye, 2005). According to Dervitsiotis (2005) vision depicts the sport organization’s future, sets general goals and portrays the desirable future image, as well as directing the sport organization’s strategy and mission. The sport organization’s vision should be associated with the strategic goals and initiatives constituted to implement the vision and should take into account all relevant stakeholders (Plant, 2009). The vision should “integrate the individual contribution in knowledge, intelligence and values from all employees, and become a driving force for increasing the potential of all organizational intellectual capital” (Bratianu & Balanescu, 2008, p.21). A powerful vision that induces customer and employee satisfaction is characterized by conciseness, clarity, abstractness, challenge, future orientation, stability, and desirability or the ability to inspire (Bratianu & Balanescu, 2008). Furthermore, other factors are significant, such as communicating the vision within the sport organization, aligning organizational processes and systems to match the vision,
motivating the staff, as well as empowering others to act toward achieving the vision. A vision statement can be used to set priorities, and also help inspire the board and staff of a sport organization (Allison & Kaye, 2005).

**Mission statement.** Bratianu and Balanescu (2008) assumed that a sport organization’s mission differs from its vision. Unlike vision, a mission unifies the sport organization’s social objectives with the source of competitive advantage. Mission includes organizational purpose, scope of market activities, and competitive distinctiveness (Slater et al., 2006). It is usually a brief statement defining the sport organization’s existence, especially the products or services offered (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). In addition a mission statement should take into consideration the management of stakeholders, ranging from the owner, employees, customers, suppliers, different governmental agencies to the community and society as a whole (Bratianu & Balanescu, 2008). Nevertheless Oakland (2001) argued that a mission statement should be not only understandable, but also communicable, believable, and usable.

**Long-term objectives.** The set of objectives are the very heart of planning process. By setting the objectives a sport organization enables the provision of a common sense of direction (Wilson & Gilligan, 2005). Establishing a long-term direction needs to be followed by transforming that direction into specific goals and objectives (Poister & Streib, 2005). The choices of these objectives have a profound impact on the sport organization (Collis & Rukstad, 2008). Strategic objectives should be specific, measurable, time-based (that may provide a structure and allow for the evaluation of their progress), realistic and result-oriented. (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Shahin & Mahbod, 2007; Collis & Rukstad, 2008). This will enable the evaluation of resource availability and the appropriate selection of key performance indicators to measure the achievement of certain goals; thereby ensuring the balance between attainability, challenge and aspiration. A sport organization should consider feasibility and progress in achieving objectives and goals, but also should consider continuous improvement (Fryer, Antony, & Douglas, 2007), forward thinking, objective analysis and evaluation of goals and priorities, seeking future actions that will guarantee the sport organizations sustainability and effectiveness in the long run (Poister & Streib, 2005).

**Environmental Assessment.** After the mission, vision, and values have been established, the critical success factors have been identified in order to respond to what a sport organization needs to achieve, a sport organization’s internal and external analysis is conducted. A sport organization may analyze its external environment using frameworks such as Porter’s five forces (bargaining power of buyers; bargaining power of suppliers; availability of substitutes; threat of new entrants; and industry rivalry); it may also assess the macroeconomic environment of
growth, interest rates, currency movements, input prices, regulations, and general expectations of the corporation’s role in society. This analysis is also known as PESTEL, meaning political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Also, the research has indicated that an assessment of the sport organization’s capabilities and performance may be undertaken in order to analyze the internal environment of sport organization. The use of Porter’s value chain model enables the identification of a sport organization distinctive resources and the categorization of capabilities concerning processes developed in order to create markets, products and services. Moreover, the sport organization should analyze the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats through the so called S.W.O.T. analysis.

**Forecasting.** According to the literature forecasting is the act of predicting the future (Mun, 2006). The forecasting process should integrate domain knowledge, historical data, causal forces acting upon the domain, and physical characteristics of the process, producing measured realizations that are to be forecast (Adya, Lusk, & Balhadjali, 2009). Quantitative or statistical approaches, i.e. statistical probabilities, classical decomposition, econometric model, Monte Carlo simulation (accounting randomness and future uncertainties through different scenarios), are used to forecast when historical data exists; and qualitative techniques, i.e. Delphi technique, market research, management assumptions, polling data, expert opinion approach, are used to forecast when historical data do not exist (Mun, 2006). Finally, the forecasting must be used as a problem-solving strategy and as a tool to cope with complexity where the simplification of scenario planning processes, as well as the assessment of different scenario options might be essential (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Adya et al., 2009).

**Critical success factors.** Many sport organizations have goals without being supported by methods. The purpose of any sport organization is to accomplish its mission. Hence, for each critical success factor, core processes should be identified in order to achieve the sport organization’s purpose of existence (Oakland, 2001). Critical success factors may be viewed as the most important sub-goals or minimum key factors that a sport organization must have or needs in order to be sufficient for the mission to be achieved. In other words critical success factors “should lead to a balanced set of deliverables for the organization” (Oakland, 2001, pp.26-27) in terms of: (a) financial and non-financial performance, (b) customer/market satisfaction, (c) people/internal organization satisfaction, and (d) environmental/societal satisfaction. According to the literature there are several critical success factors, such as management commitment, customer management, employee development and satisfaction, cultural change, clear mission statement, effective use of technology, fast response to change, circles/improvement, strategic quality plan and quality data (Fryer et al., 2007). The importance of defining the
critical success factors lies on the sport organizations’ need to increase success rate, reduce cost and strive for continuous improvement (Fryer et al., 2007).

**Key performance indicators.** Key performance indicators can be viewed as the way to translate the sport organization’s mission into clear objectives, simplify management thinking and monitor the progress of achievement as well as evaluating the organization’s success (Oakland, 2001). Shahin and Mahbod (2007) assumed that in order to narrow the risk involved in goal-setting, key performance indicators (KPIs) should be viewed as a multi-criteria decision-making problem. Based on the related literature regarding the “Analytical Hierarchy Process” (AHP) and SMART goal setting (Specific; Measurable; Attainable; Realistic; Time-sensitive), they created a novel integrated approach to prioritize key performance indicators (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007, p. 231).

1. Define and list all of the KPIs;
2. Build an AHP hierarchy in which, the goal is to prioritize KPI alternatives with respect to SMART criteria;
3. Understand the pairwise comparison between alternatives (i.e. KPIs);
4. Calculate composite priority: calculate local weights and global weights; and
5. Selection of KPIs which are more relevant to organizational goals.

Finally, the key performance indicators should be viewed as being measurable indicators of success in terms of the mission and critical success factors, based on the appropriate data collection (Oakland, 2001).

**Continuous Review.** Awareness and consideration about the forthcoming changes in the business environment are required for a sport organization to adapt rapidly and appropriately (Oakland, 2001). Moreover, a sport organization should periodically monitor alterations in the environment and review whether its initial assumptions remain valid (Allison & Kaye, 2005). It is fundamental that sport organizations should review and re-examine not only their mission, goals and objectives in the appropriate period of time but also their shared values, policies, and vision statement throughout the implementation process to achieve effectiveness in the future (Oakland, 2001; Bryson & Alston, 2005; Poister & Streib, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 2008; Brinckerhoff, 2009). Also, sport organizations could move forward to the so called “rolling forecasting”, meaning monthly updates or quarterly re-forecasting annual results which typically concern objectives and strategies in the operational level which may provide a continuous performance outlook and an overall estimate of expected future performance (Contrada, 2009). Finally, the adoption of adequate mechanism for continuous reviewing the whole organizational structure including the management’s responsibilities and operational procedures might be essential for sport organizations (Oakland, 2001).
Long-Term Strategies. The most effective means of achieving a sport organization’s purpose are strategies (Allison & Kaye, 2005). Strategies efficiently fulfill the sport organization’s mission and achieve its issue-specific goals and in general create public value (Bryson & Alston, 2005). Based on the assessment of the internal and external environment the sport organization collaborates and competes, as well as taking into account priorities and long-term objectives, develops strategies and is taken into account considering the sport organization’s future direction (Allison & Kaye, 2005). All parts and stakeholders need to be identified (Bryson & Alston, 2005) and their interrelated involvement in the development of strategies is examined and enabled (Allison & Kaye, 2005).

According to the literature an integrated management system that integrates the processes and tools needed for strategy, and enables the monitoring and improvement of the effectiveness of both long-term strategy and operations is comprised of the following six stages (Kaplan & Norton, 2008b):

1. Develop the strategy using an array of strategy tools such as mission, values, and vision statements; external competitive, economic, and environmental analyses; methodologies, such as Michael Porter’s five forces and competitive positioning framework, the resource-based view of strategy, and blue ocean strategies, as well as scenario planning, dynamic simulations, and war-gaming;
2. Plan the strategy using such tools as strategy maps and Balanced Scorecards, along with targets and strategic initiatives;
3. Align the sport organization with the strategy by cascading strategy maps and Balanced Scorecards to all organizational units, by aligning employees through a formal communications process, and by linking employees’ personal objectives and incentives to strategic objectives;
4. Plan operations using tools such as quality and process management, reengineering, process dashboards, rolling forecasts, activity-based costing, resource capacity planning, and dynamic budgeting;
5. Monitor and learn about problems, barriers, and challenges. This process integrates information about operations and strategy into a carefully designed structure of management review meetings;
6. Test and adapt the strategy, using internal operational data and new external environmental and competitive data, thus launching a new cycle of integrated strategy planning and operational execution.

Strategy Implementation

After the selection and development of long-term strategies has been com-
pleted, the establishment of both mid-range and short-range objectives and strategies that support long-term objectives and strategies follows, ensuring that all the objectives and strategies respond effectively to the strategic issues (Kaplan & Norton, 2008; Plant, 2009).

Each financial, administrative, and governance function should have its own goal statement translated to specific objectives, while for each priority concerning programs, services, and projects, specific action must be taken, and thus short-term strategies need to be implemented (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Bryson & Alston, 2005). Moreover, for an effective implementation process, adequate funding and other resources are required to create value for the sport organization and its stakeholders (Bryson & Alston, 2005), as well as short-term projections need to be developed and aligned with the long-term strategies (Allison & Kaye, 2005). Kaplan and Norton (2007) underlined that when establishing short-term goals, the related changes in performance must be forecast. This, aligned with the associated changes in each specific goal, may benefit the sport organization.

Goals typically include staffing and benefits, resource development, executive management, planning and evaluation, public relations/marketing, infrastructure (including technology, finance, information reporting and facilities) as well as networking and collaboration (Allison & Kaye, 2005). Specific actions and short-term objectives and strategies should be developed to accomplish goals related to each operating and functional area of the sport organization (Allison & Kaye, 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 2008). However, it is imperative to visualize strategies as a chain of cause-and-effect relationships among the strategic objectives (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Hence, any sport organization should use the strategy map, which will allow for objectives to be balanced and placed into three to five strategic themes which consist of distinctive sets of related strategic objectives. This will help sport organizations to maintain the integration of the objectives into the overall strategy, as well as to manage short, intermediate and long-term value created processes (Kaplan & Norton, 2008).

Short-term objectives are usually related to annual operational plans (Allison & Kaye, 2005) and last as long as twelve to eighteen months (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Slack, Chambers, Johnston and Betts (2009) stated that functional strategies may be influenced by daily experiences; however it is fundamental that they promote the sport organization’s overall strategy. Contrada (2009) identified the core management processes that comprise the operating strategy system as “sales and operations planning”, “corporate portfolio and initiative management” and “driver-based planning and rolling forecasting”. Also the decisions related to the operational strategies are significantly influenced by the sport organization’s strategic priorities (Contrada, 2009). In addition to the above, Slack et al. (2009) stated that operational strategy is the unification of decision-making and performance objectives. When the sport organization makes decisions on actions related
to operations, marketing, finance, product/service development, human resources, and other functions, it should take into account not only the long-term vision and objectives but also its own capabilities (Slack et al., 2009). Consequently, operational plans outline actions that will accomplish long-term objectives (Norton & Kaplan, 2008). Notwithstanding the above, Plant (2009) argued that successful implementation of a strategic planning process depends on the structure of the sport organization and on the sport organization’s ability to monitor its progress towards achieving its goals. Hence, the strategic planning process should be part of a strategic management system (Plant, 2009). On the other hand, Poister and Streib (2005) argued that it is more important for strategic planning to be action-oriented. The sport organization derives benefits only when strategic planning process is implemented.

Financial management is usually concerned with financial objectives which are short-term and aims to limit low effectiveness (Cong, 2008). In many sport organizations separate resource-allocation and budgeting processes, set financial targets for the next fiscal year, that have not been integrated into the goals in strategic plan (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). According to the literature the contribution of balance scorecard as an integrated strategic management system is achieving financial results, adding value to the costumers and developing peoples’ capabilities, meaning learning and growth (Kaplan & Norton, 2007; Papadakis, 2007). Moreover, the balance scorecard, as a management system, may enable the management to assess the progress of the sport organization’s strategy and specify cause-and-effect relationships throughout the strategy implementation process (Norton, 2007).

**Strategy Evaluation.** Following the formulation and implementation of the strategic planning process, the final stage is the evaluation of the sport organizations’ strategy and strategic planning process (Nadkarni & Narayanan, 2007; Papadakis, 2007; Norton & Kaplan, 2008). This final step reassesses strategies and strategic issues (i.e. mission, structure, processes, management) in order to decide on their effectiveness (Bryson & Alston, 2005).

According to the literature strategic planning is a dynamic process; therefore it should be monitored at least once a year, in order to ensure the fulfillment of goals and objectives (Allison& Kaye, 2005). Moreover, it is imperative to test the strategy, in order to assess whether the improvements are sufficient or amendments are needed (Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Specifically, Kaplan and Norton (2008) stressed the importance of examining the current financial status, by analyzing cost and profitability reports concerning each product line, costumer, market segment, channel, and region. Furthermore statistical analyses of correlations among the strategy’s performance measures are necessary so that decisions can be made on whether previous strategy development is adequate or new strategies are required.
(Kaplan & Norton, 2008). Plant (2009) determined that establishing performance measures followed by “high-level” indicators, may estimate the extent to which the sport organization has achieved its vision and goals.

Additionally, the customers are an internal part of the operational service system, highlight that service availability, quality, and efficiency may be used as measurement indicators. This approach may result in the measurement and improvement of performance while both specific and aggregate measures are taken into account (Gomes, Yasin, & Lisboa, 2007).

Also the literature highlights the use of the balance scorecard as an evaluation method. Kaplan and Norton (2007) identified important measures (e.g. customer satisfaction) that may be linked to the four perspectives of the balance scorecard, which underlies that changes in one component of the system consolidate previous changes elsewhere. Such a high correlation may support the sport organization’s strategy or help the sport organization to identify evidence of an unsuccessful strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 2007). Moreover, the balance scorecard may be viewed as a framework of strategic measurement and management system, through the translation of the sport organization’s vision and strategy into an inclusive set of performance measures (Yang & Yeh, 2009).

Finally, Oakland (2001) acknowledging the value of Deming’s PDCA cycle, meaning Plan (establish performance objectives and standards), Do (measure actual performance), Check (compare actual performance with the objectives and standards), Act (take the necessary actions to close the gaps and make the necessary improvements), proposed a measurement framework in order to enable the sport organization’s estimation of actual performance in relation to the objectives and standards. This framework may provide the basis for understanding the customers’ requirements and helping the people of the sport organization to comprehend all the aspects of the performance measurement process. The evaluation of a strategic planning process may be inadequate by itself. A culture for ongoing improvement should be appreciated towards effectiveness and quality (Oakland, 2001).

Conclusions

Since the environment is continually changing, strategic planning is a continuous process by which sport organizations derive a strategy to enable them to anticipate and respond to the changing dynamic environment in which they operate (León-Soriano, Jesús Muñoz-Torres, & Chalmeta-Rosalen, 2010). As the recent literature showed, strategic planning provides many benefits to the companies that adopt the whole process. Many studies in different business contexts have
empirically showed that strategic planning is related to the business performance and financial favorable outcomes. The sport sector, although there is little empirical evidence to prove the relationship between strategic planning and business performance, has begun to recognize the value of strategic planning as well.

In the particular paper a strategic planning process, which is applied to the sport sector, is described. Sport managers should follow step by step the whole process, in order to deal with the intricate sport business environment in which the sport organization operates, to adapt effectively to it and consequently to deliver high economic profits.

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