



The impact of organizational and management variables on the performance of Sidama Bunna Football Club

Los impactos de las variables organizativas y de gestión en el desempeño del Sidama Bunna Football Club

Authors

Wasihun Abate Sentie ^{1,2*}
Getinet Tiruneh ^{3,4}
Dagnachew Nigeru Kebede ¹
Belayneh Chekle ¹

¹ Bahir Dar University (Ethiopia)

² Pan African University Life and Earth Science Institute (Nigeria)

³ Hawassa University (Ethiopia)

⁴ Sidama Region Sport Bureau (Ethiopia)

Corresponding author:
Wasihun Abate Sentie
abatewasihun@gmail.com

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Abstract

Introduction: Football clubs play a significant role in national development by reflecting a country's organizational, financial, and strategic capacities. However, football clubs in Ethiopia have performance inconsistencies that often raise questions about internal governance and management effectiveness.

Objective: This study was aimed at examining the influence of organizational and management factors on the performance of Sidama Bunna Football Club and identifying which variables most significantly affect club success.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey design was used, involving 48 participants comprising players, coaches, managers, administrative officers, and board members selected through comprehensive sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression at a 0.05 significance level.

Results: The results indicated significant positive correlations between club performance and communication ($r = 0.771$), strategic factors ($r = 0.767$), finance ($r = 0.760$), human resources ($r = 0.750$), and material resources ($r = 0.665$). Regression analysis showed that 76.4% of the performance variance was explained by the combined model. Among all predictors, only strategic factors ($B = 0.330$, $p = 0.004$) and finance ($B = 0.202$, $p = 0.052$) remained significant in the joint analysis.

Discussion: The findings support prior research emphasizing the central role of strategic planning and financial management in football club success, while also revealing that the effects of other factors may be moderated or context-dependent.

Conclusion: It is concluded that football clubs in developing contexts require integrated management strategies, emphasizing strategic alignment and robust financial planning, to ensure sustained performance in competitive environments.

Keywords

Football club performance; organizational factors; management; sidama bunna.

Resumen

Introducción: Los clubes de fútbol desempeñan un papel fundamental en el desarrollo nacional, reflejando las capacidades organizativas, financieras y estratégicas de un país. Sin embargo, los clubes de fútbol etíopes presentan inconsistencias en su desempeño que a menudo plantean dudas sobre la gobernanza interna y la eficacia de la gestión.

Objetivo: Este estudio tuvo como objetivo examinar la influencia de los factores organizativos y de gestión en el rendimiento del Sidama Bunna Football Club e identificar las variables que más influyen en el éxito del club.

Metodología: Se utilizó un diseño de encuesta transversal con 48 participantes, entre ellos jugadores, entrenadores, directivos, personal administrativo y miembros de la junta directiva, seleccionados mediante un muestreo exhaustivo. Los datos se recopilaron mediante cuestionarios estructurados y se analizaron mediante correlación de Pearson y regresión múltiple con un nivel de significancia del 0,05.

Resultados: Los resultados indicaron correlaciones positivas significativas entre el rendimiento del club y la comunicación ($r = 0,771$), los factores estratégicos ($r = 0,767$), las finanzas ($r = 0,760$), los recursos humanos ($r = 0,750$) y los recursos materiales ($r = 0,665$). El análisis de regresión mostró que el 76,4 % de la varianza del rendimiento se explicó mediante el modelo combinado. Entre todos los predictores, solo los factores estratégicos ($B = 0,330$, $p = 0,004$) y las finanzas ($B = 0,202$, $p = 0,052$) mantuvieron su significancia en el análisis conjunto.

Discusión: Los hallazgos respaldan investigaciones previas que enfatizan el papel central de la planificación estratégica y la gestión financiera en el éxito de los clubes de fútbol, a la vez que revelan que los efectos de otros factores pueden ser moderados o dependientes del contexto.

Conclusión: Se concluye que los clubes de fútbol en contextos en desarrollo requieren estrategias de gestión integradas, con énfasis en la alineación estratégica y una planificación financiera sólida, para garantizar un rendimiento sostenido en entornos competitivos.

Palabras clave

Desempeño de clubes de fútbol; factores organizacionales; gestión; sidama bunna.



Introduction

Football is a globally dominant sport with significant economic and social impacts (Zembaba, 2018; Fan et al., 2023). Over recent decades, it has become increasingly commercialized, socialized, and integrated into the global economy and major sports events. At the national level, particularly through the performance of domestic clubs, football has become a key microcosm of social development and an important symbol of national strength and international status. It has evolved into a multi-billion dollar global industry (Bankov, 2022). Football generates substantial revenue for individuals, clubs, and national and international organizations, primarily through television broadcasts, media rights, merchandise, and ticket sales (Ramchandani & Wilson, 2022). The performance of clubs can thus have a significant spillover effect on a country's economy, impacting the financial performance of both domestic leagues and related industries (Hoffmann et al., 2002). In this context, club performance also influences how resources are allocated on an international scale (Dobson et al., 2001).

Football performance can be understood as the interaction between optimal physical, technical, tactical quality, and mental motivation (Zembaba, 2018). Scholars also suggest that a club's performance can be determined by its structure, management practices, administrative issues, and external factors (Bayisa, 2019). These factors influence not only the immediate performance of clubs but also broader national development, particularly in countries where football is a major economic driver (Bankov, 2022; Hoffmann et al., 2002).

Effective club management is shaped by organizational structures, governance mechanisms, and strategic alignment (Mintzberg, 1979; Relvas et al., 2010). However, governance practices in football vary widely. While clubs in developed countries often operate under formalized frameworks, those in emerging markets, including Ethiopia, face challenges such as financial instability, limited managerial expertise, and informal governance models (Toesland, 2023).

Sport organizations are social entities involved in the sport industry, goal-directed, with a consciously structured activity system and identifiable boundaries (Slack & Parent, 2006; Sentie et al., 2024). Football clubs, as sport organizations, need to have clearly defined goals and structured activities to achieve them. A well-managed football club, utilizing resources such as human capital (coaches, players and admin staff), finances, and materials, can drive significant performance improvements (Zülch et al., 2021). However, without strong organizational elements to hold the club together and provide direction, achieving goals becomes challenging (Carlsson-Wall et al., 2016).

Management is the glue that bonds the various units of a football club, providing the necessary control, communication, motivation, nurturing, and leadership to achieve its goals (Sentie et al., 2024). To accomplish this, an efficient structure is required to ensure that resources are used optimally and the club's goals are met. Internal factors, such as institutional support, team identification, and player-coach ability (Arroba et al., 2021), along with external factors like fan support (Jones, 2002), are critical in shaping a football team's success. Clubs with solid organizational structures and strong support from stakeholders, including coaches and fans, tend to perform better and achieve long-term success.

In Ethiopia, football clubs operate within an informal governance structure, with decentralized decision-making, inconsistent regulatory enforcement, and significant financial instability (Toesland, 2023). Unlike their European counterparts, which are often structured as corporations with clear hierarchies, Ethiopian clubs are typically managed by regional governments or local stakeholders. This often leads to inconsistent governance models and financial management practices. Limited private investment, reliance on government funding, and fluctuating sponsorship deals create financial unpredictability, complicating long-term planning. Furthermore, unlike the shareholder-driven ownership models seen in leagues like the English Premier League or the Bundesliga, Ethiopian clubs frequently lack such structures, contributing to governance inefficiencies. This presents unique challenges that necessitate a broader examination through the lens of established organizational and strategic theories. Pugh et al. (1968) emphasize that organizational dimensions, such as formalization, centralization, and specialization, influence efficiency and effectiveness. In contrast, Ethiopian football clubs often operate with informal governance structures, decentralized decision-making, and inconsistent regulatory enforcement, which hinder their stability and growth. Mintzberg (1979) highlights the importance of structuring organizations through clear hierarchies and well-defined roles, a model that has proven effective in Euro-

pean football leagues where clubs function as corporations with strategic alignment. However, Ethiopian clubs frequently rely on government funding and lack formal ownership models, leading to financial instability and governance inefficiencies. Additionally, Rompotis (2024) underscores the role of financial management in the sustainability and success of football clubs, noting that financial performance is directly linked to governance structures, revenue streams, and investment strategies. In Ethiopia, limited private investment, fluctuating sponsorship deals, and mismanagement of resources pose significant barriers to long-term club success. These differences highlight the need for a contextualized approach to analyzing the role of organizational and management factors in club performance, especially in under-researched football economies.

Sidama Bunna Football Club, based in Hawassa, Sidama region, is one of the 19 premier league clubs in Ethiopia (Soccer Ethiopia, 2024). Founded in 2006 as Dara Kenema, the club has made notable progress, advancing to the Ethiopian Premier League after winning the Ethiopian Higher League in 2008/09. Despite its aspirations to win the league and participate in continental tournaments, Sidama Bunna has yet to achieve these goals (Toesland, 2023). The club, like many African clubs, struggles with funding, relying on government subsidies and private donations. This financial uncertainty, combined with corruption and weak governance hampers its potential (Toesland, 2023).

Many scholars argue that the success of football clubs are not only due to talented players and good coaches but also strong organizational structures and management. However, in Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, most clubs lack strong structures and management. As a result, many clubs are not licensed by the national federation, which is responsible for providing club licensing (Tolesa, 2017). This gap highlights the need for further research into the organizational and management factors that influence football clubs' performance, especially in underdeveloped football economies like Ethiopia.

Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap by investigating the influence of organizational and management factors on the performance of Sidama Bunna Football Club. It also tried to explore the relationship between strong organizational structures, effective management, finance, human resources and the performance of football clubs.

Method

A research design enables researchers to integrate various components of a research effort into a coherent approach that allows the research questions to be effectively addressed (Creswell, 2012). This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design, which is widely used in social science research to capture a comprehensive snapshot of a subject at a specific point in time. This design is particularly suitable for identifying relationships among variables and describing current conditions or practices without manipulating the study environment (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Participants

Participant selection in research on football club performance often includes key internal stakeholders such as players, coaches, technical staff, and club executives, as they are directly involved in decision-making, execution, and outcomes on and off the field (Njororai, 2019; Arroba et al., 2021). In this study, a total of 48 individuals involving 28 players, 5 coaches, 10 administrators, and 5 board members were selected using a comprehensive sampling technique to ensure diverse and relevant perspectives. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Hawassa University Department of Sport Science Ethical Review Committee in December 2023, numbered IRB/8064/2023.

Procedure

To collect the data necessary for the study, questionnaires were used. Hence, questionnaires are popular data collection instruments that help to offer a fast, efficient, and inexpensive means of gathering large amounts of information from sizable sample volumes (Yogesh, 2006). Thus, the Strategic Planning Questionnaire (SPQ) was used (Sports Community, 2013) to obtain relevant data.

The first quantitative instrument is the Organisational Factors Scale (OFS), which has 16 items with three subscales used to measure organisational structure, communication and strategic factors in club performance. The instrument is a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.



The second instrument is the Management Factor Scale (MFS) which is 17 items with four subscales which used to measure human resource management, materials and resources and finance and budget of the club. The instrument is a 5- point Likert-scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The third quantitative instrument is Sport Club Performance Scale (SCPS). This scale is a self-developed scale with 10 items of questions. The instrument is a 5 - point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The sociodemographic information was also included which helped to know the sociodemographic characteristics of participants. To ensure a good and rapid process of data collection and total respondent understanding, the researcher used a translator who has legal permission to translate data collection tools into Amharic to facilitate respondents who might be having difficulty understanding English statements.

Validity and reliability

According to Creswell (2012), the validity of a test may be defined as the accuracy with which it measures that which it is intended to measure or as the degree to which it preaches infallibility in measuring what it purports to measure. While reliability refers to the consistency of scores obtained by the same individuals when re-examined with the same test on different occasions, or with different sets of equivalent times (Yogesh, 2006). To ensure the validity of this instrument, copies of questionnaires were presented to the researcher's supervisors (2), experts in the fields of sport. All comments and suggestions were carefully followed to improve the quality of the instruments.

Although Cronbach's Alpha is commonly used as a measure of internal consistency, which is how closely related a set of components is as a group (Sentie, 2020). For this study, the reliability test of all 43 variables was done using Cronbach's alpha. The overall reliability score of the study was 0.891, which suggests that the survey items consistently measured the intended variables. A study by Sentie (2020) emphasizes that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable for psychological constructs, which supports the reliability results found in this study.

Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically arranging, organizing and analyzing the questionnaires that have been collected for the intended study. Based on the above fact, therefore, this study used quantitative analysis approaches through percentages, tables, mean, and standard deviation. In addition, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and multiple regression were used for inferential analysis using computerized statistical package software (SPSS version 26).

Results

Results of Assumption tests

The bell-shaped curve that characterizes all normal distributions was kept by a normal curve when the assumption of normality was verified for all variables using graphical analysis (the histogram figure 2) (Randolph & Meyers, 2013; Hair et al., 2014). No outliers were found in this data when multivariate outliers were also examined using the Cook's distance, where the value was less than 1. Moreover, we checked the multicollinearity assumption by using the tolerance value and VIF (variance inflation factor) for their cut-off points of $>.10$ and <10 , respectively (Hair et al., 2014; Kline, 2023).

Figure 1. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

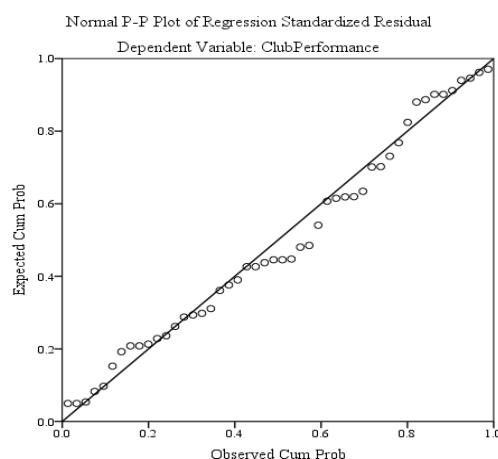
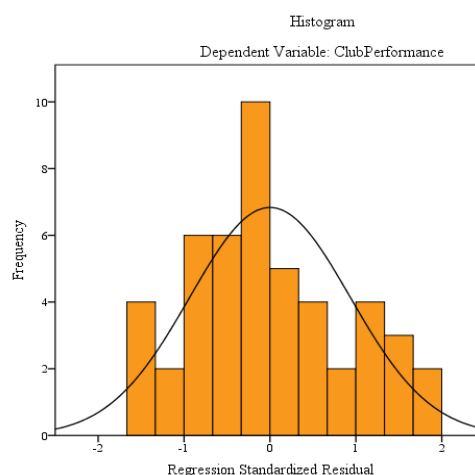


Figure 2. Normality of the Regression (histogram)



Correlation Matrix

The following table shows the relationship between organizational factors (organizational structure, organizational capabilities, and communication), management factors (stakeholders' satisfaction, management practices, and materials and resources), and effective sport service delivery in Ethiopian sport governing bodies.

The results from Table 2 show that there was a strong positive significant relationship between club performance and communication ($r=0.771^{**}$, $p<0.01$), strategic factors ($r=0.767^{**}$, $p<0.01$), finance ($r=0.760^{**}$, $p<0.01$), human resource ($r=0.750^{**}$, $p<0.01$) while there was a moderate positive significant relationship between club performance and material resources ($r=0.665^{**}$, $p<0.01$). In contrast, club structure ($r=0.254^{*}$, $p<0.05$) showed a significant correlation, but its relative impact on performance appears moderated by other variables.

Table 2. Correlations of independent variables with club performance

No	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Club Performance	1.000						
2	Club Structure	0.254*	1.000					
3	Strategic Factors	0.767**	0.092	1.000				
4	Communication	0.771**	0.188	0.665**	1.000			
5	Human Resource	0.750**	0.308*	0.690**	0.725**	1.000		
6	Materials Resource	0.665**	0.138	0.607**	0.710**	0.738**	1.000	
7	Finance	0.760**	0.274*	0.622**	0.766**	0.687**	0.554**	1.000

*Significant differences, $p<0.05$.

**Significant differences, $p<0.01$.



Table 3 examines the joint contribution of organizational factors specifically Communication, Club Structure, and Strategic Factors to club performance. The results reveal a strong correlation ($R = 0.852$) between these factors and club performance. The R Square value of 0.726 indicates that approximately 72.6% of the variance in club performance can be explained by these organizational factors. After accounting for the number of predictors, the Adjusted R Square of 0.707 confirms the model's robustness. The ANOVA results ($F(3, 44) = 38.841, p < 0.001$) demonstrate that the model is statistically significant, indicating that these factors jointly have a meaningful impact on performance. Among these, Strategic Factors ($B = 0.444, p < 0.001$) have the strongest influence, reinforcing existing literature emphasizing the importance of strategic planning in sports organizations. Communication ($B = 0.421, p < 0.001$) also plays a significant role, supporting studies that emphasize the importance of communication for club success. In contrast, Club Structure ($B = 0.063, p = 0.117$) is not statistically significant, suggesting that while structure plays a role, its impact may be indirect.

Table 3. The joint relative contribution of organisational factors to club performance

Model Summary: $R = 0.852$; $R^2 = 0.726$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.707$; Std. Error= 0.365; Durbin-Watson; 1.640					
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.534	3	5.178	38.841	0.000
Residual	5.866	44	0.133		
Total	21.399	47			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.112	0.235		-0.477	0.636
Club Structure	0.063	0.040	0.129	1.599	0.117
Strategic Factors	0.444	0.101	0.463	4.380	0.000
Communication	0.421	0.103	0.438	4.086	0.000

Dependent Variable: Club Performance

Predictors: (Constant), Club Structure, Strategic Factors, Communication

Table 4 focuses on the joint contribution of management factors, such as Finance, Materials Resources, and Human Resources, to club performance. This analysis shows a strong correlation ($R = 0.833$) and reveals that 69.3% of the variance in club performance is explained by these management factors, with an Adjusted R Square of 0.672 indicating a robust model. The ANOVA results ($F(3, 44) = 33.129, p < 0.001$) confirm the model's statistical significance. Among the management factors, Finance ($B = 0.353, p < 0.001$) emerges as the most impactful, consistent with findings that emphasize the importance of financial stability for football club success. Human Resource ($B = 0.235, p = 0.043$) is also statistically significant, suggesting that HR practices influence performance. However, Materials Resource ($B = 0.167, p = 0.117$) is not statistically significant, although it still hints at the potential importance of resource management.

Table 4. The joint relative contribution of management factors to club performance

Model Summary: $R = 0.833$; $R^2 = 0.693$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.672$; Std. Error= 0.386; Durbin-Watson; 2.034					
ANOVA					
Mode	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	14.833	3	4.944	33.129	0.000
Residual	6.567	44	0.149		
Total	21.399	47			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.278	0.211		1.316	0.195
Human Resource	0.235	0.113	0.297	2.081	0.043
Materials Resource	0.167	0.105	0.199	1.597	0.117
Finance	0.353	0.091	0.446	3.862	0.000

Dependent Variable: Club Performance

Predictors: (Constant), Finance, Materials Resource, Human Resource

The joint relative contribution of all variables: Finance, Club Structure, Materials Resource, Strategic Factors, Communication, and Human Resource demonstrates a powerful correlation ($R = 0.874$) when all factors are combined. The R Square value of 0.764 indicates that these factors explain 76.4% of the

variance in club performance, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach that considers multiple dimensions. The Adjusted R Square of 0.730 further supports the model's robustness. The ANOVA results ($F(6, 41) = 22.164, p < 0.001$) confirm the significant influence of these variables on club performance. In this combined model, Strategic Factors ($B = 0.330, p = 0.004$) and Finance ($B = 0.202, p = 0.052$) remain significant, reinforcing their critical roles. However, Communication ($B = 0.182, p = 0.195$) is no longer significant, suggesting that other factors in the model may moderate its impact. Similarly, Club Structure, Human Resources, and Materials Resources are also not statistically significant in this combined model, indicating that their influence may be overshadowed by the more dominant factors of strategic planning and finance.

Table 5 provides the impact of various organizational and management factors on the performance of the football club.

Table 5. Joint relative contribution of variables

Model Summary: $R = 0.874$; $R^2 = 0.764$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.730$; Std. Error= 0.351; Durbin-Watson; 1.876					
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16.356	6	2.726	22.164	.000
Residual	5.043	41	0.123		
Total	21.399	47			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-0.100	0.232		-0.432	0.668
Club Structure	0.034	0.041	0.070	0.844	0.404
Strategic Factors	0.330	0.110	0.345	3.012	0.004
Communication	0.182	0.138	0.189	1.317	0.195
Human Resource	0.091	0.113	0.115	0.808	.424
Materials Resource	0.072	0.104	0.085	0.690	0.494
Finance	0.202	0.101	0.255	2.000	0.052

Dependent Variable: Club Performance

Predictors: (Constant), Finance, Club Structure, Materials Resource, Strategic Factors, Communication, Human Resource

Discussion

This scientific work investigates the influence of organisational and management variables on the football performance of Sidama Bunna football club.

During this study, it was seen that the majority of respondents were young, with 45.4% below the age of 25 and 36.4% between 25-35 years. This reflects a youthful demographic heavily engaged in the football club. The finding that younger individuals (below 25 years) form the majority of participants aligns with existing research that suggests youth engagement in sports is critical for development. According to the study by Bailey et al. (2013), youth sports participation is linked to various benefits, including physical health, social skills, and psychological well-being, which can indirectly enhance team performance.

The educational attainment of respondents was varied, with one third of respondents only completed their secondary school (35.4%) while 64.6% of respondents hold a diploma and above. A significant portion of respondents (46%) had 5-10 years of experience, suggesting a relatively experienced cohort. However, only 12.5% had over 15 years of experience, indicating a potential gap in long-term experience within the club. The mixed educational background of respondents, with a majority holding diplomas, could be compared with studies suggesting that higher education levels are linked to better decision-making and strategic planning. In sports contexts, practical experience and vocational training can sometimes outweigh formal education in influencing performance. According to Slack and Parent (2006), experience in sports management can be more critical than formal education for effective club management. However, the limited influence of human resources in the regression analysis of this study may suggest that simply having experience is not enough; the quality and relevance of that experience might be more critical.



The results from Table 2 show that there was a strong positive significant relationship between club performance and communication ($r=0.771^{**}$, $p<0.01$), strategic factors ($r= 0.767^{**}$, $p<0.01$), finance ($r=0.760^{**}$, $p<0.01$), human resource ($r= 0.750^{**}$, $p<0.01$) while there was a moderate positive significant relationship between club performance and material resources ($r= 0.665^{**}$, $p<0.01$). In contrast, club structure ($r= 0.254^{*}$, $p<0.05$) showed a significant correlation, but its relative impact on performance appears moderated by other variables.

Communication has been repeatedly identified as a critical element in effective team and organizational performance. The strong correlation between Communication and Club Performance ($r = 0.771$, $p < 0.01$) corroborates earlier findings by Hoye et al. (2015), who emphasized that clear communication within a club facilitates better coordination, reduces misunderstandings, and aligns all stakeholders towards common goals. This result reinforces the importance of maintaining robust communication channels in achieving high performance.

The analysis correlation revealed a strong positive correlation between Strategic Factors and Club Performance ($r = 0.767$, $p < 0.01$) is in line with existing literature that highlights the importance of strategic planning in sports organizations. For instance, Hargreaves et al. (2014) and Woldeyes et al. (2025) found that clubs with well-articulated strategic goals tend to outperform those without a clear strategy. The findings of this study support these findings, reinforcing the idea that a club's long-term planning, goal-setting, and adaptability are crucial drivers of success.

Human Resource management is consistently highlighted as a key determinant of success in sports organizations. The significant correlation between Human Resource and Club Performance ($r = 0.750$, $p < 0.01$) aligns with the work of Taylor et al. (2008), who found that clubs that invest in recruiting, developing, and retaining skilled personnel tend to perform better. The findings echo this, suggesting that effective human resource practices are integral to the success of football clubs.

The finding that Materials Resource is significantly correlated with Club Performance ($r = 0.665$, $p < 0.01$) aligns with previous research by Dawson et al. (2000), which noted that access to and the effective management of materials (e.g., equipment, facilities) are essential for a club's operational success. This suggests that while materials resources alone may not guarantee success, their proper utilization significantly contributes to overall performance.

Financial management has been widely recognized as a critical factor in the success of football clubs. The strong correlation between Finance and Club Performance ($r = 0.760$, $p < 0.01$) supports the findings of Rompotis (2024), who demonstrated that financial stability and resource availability are closely linked to on-field success. This suggests that clubs with better financial management are more likely to allocate resources effectively across various operational areas, thereby enhancing their performance.

Previous studies in sports management have often emphasized the importance of a well-defined organizational structure for the success of football clubs (Sentie et al., 2024). However, the weak correlation between Club Structure and Club Performance found in this study ($r = 0.254$) suggests that structure alone may not be a decisive factor in enhancing performance. This aligns with research by Smith and Stewart (2010), who argue that while organizational structure is necessary for operational efficiency, its impact on performance outcomes is mediated by other factors such as strategic management and resource allocation. Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with the notion that structure provides a foundation, but its influence on performance is indirect.

The regression analysis results provide significant insights into the organizational and management factors that influence the performance of a football club. These findings align with and, in some cases, contrast with existing literature in sports management and organizational behavior. The regression models showed that strategic factors and communication had significant positive impacts on club performance, while club structure was not a significant predictor. The significant impact of strategic factors on club performance is consistent with sports management literature. According to Hoye et al. (2015), strategic planning is crucial in sports organizations as it aligns resources with the long-term goals of the club, thereby improving performance outcomes. The positive correlation between communication and performance is also well-supported. Robbins & Judge (2018) and Pilatti et al. (2024) discuss how effective communication within organizations fosters teamwork, reduces conflicts, and leads to better performance. In sports clubs, clear communication channels can enhance coordination and ensure that all members are aligned with the club's goals.

The finding that club structure did not significantly impact performance contradicts some studies. For instance, Hu and Shu (2024) argue that organizational structure plays a pivotal role in shaping the efficiency and effectiveness of operations within sports teams. A well-defined structure is believed to provide clarity in roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes, which can enhance performance. However, the results suggest that other factors may override the structural influence in this particular context.

Among management factors, finance was a significant predictor of performance, while human and material resources were less influential. The significant role of financial management in club performance aligns with findings by Smith & Stewart (2010) and Getnet et al. (2025) show that financial stability is a cornerstone of successful sports organizations. Adequate financial resources allow for better talent acquisition, training facilities, and overall operations, directly impacting performance.

The combined model, including all variables, explained 76.4% of the variance in club performance, with strategic factors, finance, and communication being the most significant contributors.

Conclusions

The study highlights that the efficiency of football clubs is heavily influenced by strategic planning, effective communication, and financial management. While organizational structure did not show a strong direct impact on performance, it might still play a supportive role in enhancing the effectiveness of other factors. The demographics suggest that the clubs are largely composed of younger, moderately educated individuals with a reasonable level of experience. This demographic composition could be leveraged to build more robust strategic and management frameworks that capitalize on the energy and adaptability of a younger workforce.

In conclusion, football clubs aiming to improve performance should focus on strengthening strategic factors, enhancing communication channels, and ensuring robust financial management. Additionally, while the educational and experiential backgrounds of respondents are varied, further investment in educational and professional development within the clubs could enhance overall effectiveness and sustainability in the long term.

The regression models showed that strategic factors and communication had significant positive impacts on club performance, while club structure was not a significant predictor. Among management factors, finance was a significant predictor of performance, while human and material resources were less influential. The combined model, including all variables, explained 76.4% of the variance in club performance, with strategic factors, finance, and communication being the most significant contributors.

Therefore, prioritizing strategic planning with clearly defined long-term goals aligned with the club's mission is critical. Strengthening communication through structured protocols and digital tools can improve coordination across departments. Robust financial management, including detailed budgeting, regular audits, and diversification of revenue streams, is necessary to ensure financial sustainability. Investing in human resource development through continuous training, as well as optimizing the use of material resources such as training facilities and equipment, contributes to a more effective performance environment. Leadership development and regular performance evaluations should also be implemented to foster accountability and growth. Moreover, aligning the club's organizational structure with strategic goals and enhancing engagement with the local community can build a solid foundation for long-term success.

For future research, the study suggests exploring financial models to support the long-term sustainability of football clubs, especially in financially constrained environments. Comparative studies across different leagues and regions could uncover best practices and assess how cultural, economic, and regulatory factors influence performance. Furthermore, longitudinal studies tracking club performance over time would offer deeper insights into the effectiveness of management strategies. These studies should incorporate objective metrics such as financial data and team performance statistics to ensure the reliability and applicability of findings across different football contexts.

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Authors' and translators' details:

Wasihun Abate Sentie
Getinet Tiruneh
Dagnachew Nigeru Kebede
Belayneh Chekle

abatewasihun@gmail.com
getinettiruneh2@gmail.com
dagnesoccer@gmail.com
admbelaya@gmail.com

Author
Author
Author
Author & Translator