

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Talent Management Processes as Predictors of Long-Term Athlete Development in Sports Organizations in Burundi

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ABSTRACT

Background. Managing talent involves all the key elements of human resource management. It is evident to overemphasize the role played by sports administrators, coaches, and trainers in an effective long-term development program of athletes in sports organizations in Burundi. The need is high to implement the management program to mitigate the issues that hamper the development of sportsmen. **Objectives.** The objective of the study is to determine the talent management processes as predictors of long-term athlete development in sports organizations in Burundi. The specific objectives were formulated from five variables, namely: strategic planning, talent acquisition, and retention, performance management, career development, as well as compensation, and motivation. **Methods.** The sample size consists of 200 male and female respondents, comprising 80 sports administrators, coaches, and trainers, and 120 athletes from Sports Federations in Burundi. These respondents were active sports administrators and athletes in national and international competitions. A descriptive study design was used while validated questionnaires designed in line with a five-point Likert scale were used for data collection and analysis. **Results.** The results indicated that all five hypotheses were significant ($p < 0.05$). The processes of talent management were perceived to contribute to the long-term athlete development program in Burundi. **Conclusion.** The government should provide public sports facilities for youth use. Sports federations are encouraged to prioritize investments in qualified sports personnel, as well as the development of youth training centers and sports academies.

KEYWORDS: *Talent Management, Sports Organizations, Athlete Development, Human Capital, Long-Term Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Talent management touches on all key human resource areas, from hiring to employee onboarding and from performance management to retention. This underscores the significance of talent management. Sports organizations spend a lot of money looking for athletes who have the potential to be great. Several studies on the dimensions, factors, and patterns of talent management have been conducted in various countries around the world (1). The goal of talent

management is to boost productivity and to motivate, engage, and retain athletes to improve their performance. The long-term athlete development programs are designed to identify talented athletes who have demonstrated strong performance in sport-specific abilities that are indicative of future professional success. Professional success in any given sport requires an understanding of sports coaching theory and its application to elite athlete training. Sports

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coaches have expressed the need for a long-term strategy for athlete development (2).

Diverse sources of information have emphasized and written about the development, growth, and maturation of developing athletes, which are of great importance to coaches, teachers, parents, and youth sports organizations (3). Coaches who follow the long-term athlete development model and implement its practices are more likely to develop athletes who reach their full athletic potential (4). Furthermore, sports organizations' and administrators' role delivery has been identified as becoming more important to elite athletes' preparation for performance at top-level competitions. This study focuses on the talent management processes as predictors of the long-term athlete development programmes in sports organizations in Burundi.

It aims to determine the strategic planning, talent acquisition and retention, performance management, career development, compensation, and motivation for the long-term development of athletes. Planning is the process of directing a sports organization based on past analyses, purpose evaluations, current situation evaluations, and future projections, selecting goals and methods for achieving them through politics, strategies, programs, and plans (5). The succession plan should be stated clearly so that senior executives and lower-level employees (6) support the process. It helps to fill open positions in the event of redundancy (7) thus, minimizing and even eliminating current and future staffing issues. To this extent, a sports organization must focus on investing in people as the primary capital to increase its competitive advantage. Talent acquisition and retention is a comprehensive, strategic approach to attracting, sourcing, recruiting, assessing, hiring, and onboarding the best talent to achieve business goals (8). Strategic talent acquisition aids organizations in building talent pipelines and forecasting future talent requirements. Furthermore, someone with a talent can accomplish something without exerting much effort (9).

Detection entails finding suitable sportsmen who are not currently participating in the sport (10) whereas talent acquisition seeks new talent by recognizing and cultivating the talent that exists already. As a result, high-profile coaching, scientific and medical interventions, high-level training and competitions, counseling and good social support, as well as effective time

management, are all required (11). Employee retention significantly affects the employees' overall performance and the institution's profitability. In a human capital context, investing in people with expertise and talent has significant economic benefits. The cost of losing key talent is significantly higher because their impact and contributions are greater than those of other employees (12). Performance management is regarded as a term used to improve team performance based on the principles of measurement, appraisal, action, and monitoring (13). Performance management aims to create an environment where people can perform to the best of their abilities and produce the highest quality work most efficiently and effectively.

In the same way, effective performance management allows employees to align their activities with the organization's goals. Career development relates to the talent retention aspect and the idea that hiring from within is not only an option but is often preferable. Developing potential leaders entails providing them with professional development tools that will help them advance in their careers. The development of young athletes who aspire to make a successful junior-to-senior transition and continue in elite and professional sports overlaps with career and talent development research. Career development can be viewed as the gradual acceptance of terms that occurs between an aspiring athlete and the entire environment (14). In addition, learning and motivation are other important components of talent management within a sports organization. Learning is more than just training; semantics play an important role here.

Professional sportsmen are primarily motivated by reputation and financial rewards (15). The coach's organizing role should therefore include practices that provide perceptions of fair compensation and team security (16). Sports achievements on a national and international level are no longer considered private property and are now regarded as a source of national pride and honor (17). At the national level, the sports federations have responsibilities for the development and promotion of sports in the public and on championship stages (18) to support the talented athletes battling insufficient infrastructure and equipment. Moreover, the value of sports to a nation cannot be overstated, particularly among youths who are active participants in a variety of national issues (19). Managing people in sports

organizations offers a thorough examination of the theory and practice of human resource management within a strategic framework to include: recruitment, training and development, performance management and appraisal, motivation and reward, organizational culture, employee relations, diversity, and managing change (20). These strategies are meaningful to mitigate the team's failures and losses as a result of insufficient management skills. Moreover, individuals with critical thinking are likely to innovate and implement scientific methods and techniques. It includes physical education teachers, economics, all decision-making teams, and staff. The results of Burundi's participation in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games in athletics, swimming, and boxing can be attributed to a lack of long-term development pathways. Theoretically, the accomplishments of sports organizations that are capable of performing well in talent management can be expected to produce good results. This study aims to determine whether talent management processes are applied in Burundi and if they contribute to long-term athlete development in sports organizations in Burundi.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants. Two hundred participants, made up of eighty sports personnel and one hundred and twenty athletes from sports federations in Burundi, were selected for this study.

Instruments. The research instruments were self-developed, and administered to 96 participants via one-on-one interaction, and 24

participants online. The instruments contained 40 items on a five-point Likert scale and were designed to generate data on talent management processes.

Data analysis. A descriptive survey research design was suitable for the study. The tools of the Scientific Packages for Social Sciences were used to analyze the collected data. First, descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the socio-demographic details of the respondents. Second, inferential statistics using the Linear Regression model were adequate to test the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS

Table 1 revealed that 70 (87.0%) administrators were male and 10 (13.0%) were female. The table also showed that 1 (1.0%) of administrators had work experience of less than 1 year, 16 (20.0%) had work experience of between 1-2 years, 31 (39.0%) had worked for between 3-5 years, 23 (29.0%) had work experience ranging between 6-10 years, and 9 (11.0%) had work experience of more than 10 years. This shows that the majority of the respondents have work experience of between 3-5 years. Moreover, the majority of athletes were male (83.0%), whereas 20 (17.0%) were female. The majority of athletes who had 1-2 years with the current team were 60 (50.0%), followed by 37 (31.0%) with 3-5 years, followed by 15 (13.0%) athletes with 6-10 years, followed by 4 (3.0%) athletes with 1 year and >10 years with the current team.

Table 1. Demographic details

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Sports administrators (N=80)		
Sex	Male	70
	Female	10
Years of experience	<1 year	1
	1-2 years	16
	3-5 years	31
	6-10 years	23
	>10 years	9
Athletes (N=120)		
Sex	Male	100
	Female	20
Years with the current team	1 year	4
	1-2 years	60
	3-5 years	37
	6-10 years	15
	>10 years	4

Table 2 revealed that strategic planning was significant in the long-term athlete development program $p = 0.001$. Table 3 reveals that talent acquisition and retention were good to contribute to the long-term program in Burundi ($p < 0.05$). Table 4 yielded ($p = 0.000$). This implies that performance management relatively contributes to the long-term athlete development program in

Burundi. Table 5 shows that career development had a significant relative contribution to the long-term athlete development program in Burundi ($p < 0.05$). There was a positive relationship ($r = 0.082$). The Table 6 revealed a positive relationship ($r = 0.15$) between compensation and motivation, and the model was significant ($p = 0.000$).

Table 2. Regression analysis between strategic planning and long-term athlete development program

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.000	1	.000	13.095	.001 ^b
Residual	2.000	78	.035		
Total	3.000	79			

Table 3. Regression analysis of talent acquisition and retention in the long-term athlete development program

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.016	1	.016	.000	.000 ^b
Residual	3.000	78	.041		
Total	3.000	79			

Table 4. Regression analysis between performance management and long-term athlete development program

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.092	1	.092	2.000	.000 ^b
Residual	3.000	78	.040		
Total	3.000	79			

Table 5. Regression between career development and long-term athlete development program

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.022	1	.022	.000	.000 ^b
Residual	3.000	78	.041		
Total	3.000	79			

Table 6. Relationship between compensation and motivation

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.001	1	.001	.018	.000 ^b
Residual	3.000	78	.041		
Total	3.000	79			

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine the talent management processes as predictors of long-term athlete development in sports organizations in Burundi. For sports organizations to attain their goals, a thorough strategic plan must be established to lead employees to achieve the overall organization's goals. The results of the current study revealed that strategic planning was significant in contributing to the long-term

development program. This further helps to reject the null hypothesis. (21) supported that human resource-planning schemes can be used to identify critical roles in organizations' success as well as those that are likely to become critical in the medium to long term. It is also essential to place the right people at the right time and in the right place to achieve strategic objectives in the long term and survive in the competitive environment (22). Hence, as a leader's knowledge

of strategic planning increases, so will their commitment to planning.

The findings demonstrated that talent acquisition and retention jointly contribute to the long-term athlete development program in Burundi. Furthermore, talent acquisition and retention is a comprehensive, strategic approach to attracting, sourcing, recruiting, assessing, hiring, and onboarding the best talent to achieve business goals (8). A previous study emphasized the vital role of athletes who enter the achievement podium of competitive sports at a national level (23). Employee retention has a significant positive impact both on the employees' overall performance and the institution's profitability (12). Performance management has a significant relative contribution to the development of athletes. The results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Some sports federations rely on their existing strategies to retain their sportsmen, among others, the recruitment of athletes and individuals with creative thinking. The findings also found that career development has a relative contribution to long-term athlete development in Burundi. The transition from junior to senior is crucial for athletes who want to excel in sports. By implementing policies and practices that favor the career development of employees, management should endeavor to marry organizational and employee interests. Sports organizations are expected to provide support to athletes during their retirement (24). Therefore, the activities and practices that a sports organization uses to retain coaches include providing coaches with honoraria, coaching training, and the opportunity to coach at a higher level (25). Compensation and motivation were perceived to be good in the long-term athlete development program. Previous research found that organizations devise various strategies like adequate compensation plans and opportunities for career development to gain employee satisfaction with the job, resulting in increased employee (sportsmen) motivation and commitment to the attainment of corporate goals (26).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to determine the talent management processes as predictors of long-term athlete development in sports organizations in Burundi. The findings of the study revealed that strategic planning had a meaningful contribution to predicting the long-term athlete development program. It had also been discovered that talent acquisition and retention were adequate to predict the long-term athlete development program in

Burundi. Likewise, the study found performance management adequate to improve sportsmen's capabilities to effectively execute professional duties, was perceived to contribute to the long-term development program in Burundi. It was further concluded that career development was essential to advance sportsmen's careers. Sports administrators carry out the annual evaluations and assessments of the mission statement to better enhance the personnel as well as the athletes' performances. Compensation and motivation, jointly contribute to the long-term athlete development program. However, this study discovered a lack of sports facilities, including sports centers. Despite this, there are not enough scholarships offered to administrators/ athletes to develop their careers. As a result, the talent management processes were perceived to have a great positive impact on the development programs of athletes. Further study should endeavor to emphasize the development plan of a sportsman's career on a long-term basis as a future sports administrator who is saddled with the task of running the sports organization activity.

APPLICABLE REMARKS

- Sports governing bodies in Burundi should consider investing in human resources to place the right people in the right place.
- Obtaining professional athletes necessitates the hiring of professional administrators and coaches.
- Moreover, sports federations are recommended to provide the existing personnel with adequate development training, as it is a key success factor in yielding the best results at the international level.
- The government and the Department of Sports in Burundi should assist sports promotion by increasing public sports facilities for federations to obtain enough sports training centers where talent may indeed be cultivated as future sports ambassadors.
- Sports federations/teams in Burundi territory should work to put in place academies with a clear mission statement for getting athletes started in their training sessions at a very young age.
- For this suggestion to have an effect, the Ministry of Sports should consider onboarding physical education graduates so that they will be able to educate those youths at a grassroots level.
- The study will provide insights into talent management as well as new information on athlete development programs.

- The government of Burundi, together with the sports department, will take advantage of this study to initiate a policy that encourages the growth of sports in various disciplines.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Study concept and design: François Hatungimana. Acquisition of data: François Hatungimana. Analysis and interpretation of data: François Hatungimana. Drafting of the manuscript: François Hatungimana. Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content: O. I. Oladipo. Statistical analysis: François Hatungimana. Administrative, technical, and material support: O. I. Oladipo. Study supervision: O. I. Oladipo.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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