

SportLogia, 2023

Received: 9. 9. 2023.

E-ISSN: 1986-6119

Approved: 5. 10. 2023.

DOI: 10.7251/SGIA2319045S

UDK: 371.3:796.926-028.31

MODEL OF ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT IN SKI SCHOOLS

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SUMMARY

Alpine skiing is classified as a poly-structured sport on snowy and icy terrains yearly. It mainly attracts skiers during winter, including beginners of various ages and genders. This paper addresses Ski Schools' organization and management model, aiming to guide instructing beginners in skiing considering their gender, age, needs, and interests. Ski schools are envisioned as open and innovative organizations with well-defined goals, tasks, and work programs. The primary objective of ski schools is to impart rational skiing techniques (descent down slopes) while considering the quality of equipment, slope conditions, and the competence of sports instructors and teachers working within ski schools. This study delves into the specific problem of theoretical representation of organization and management in ski schools, which operate as intricate systems within our ski resorts. The paper presents original research outcomes, offering a fresh perspective on previously explored questions and issues related to organization (manifestations) and management in ski schools. A clear and content-rich presentation of the problems, organization, and management in ski schools characterizes the paper's structure. Rather than concluding, the practical focus should be on well-organized and managed ski schools led by competent management and staff to ensure appropriately trained and safe skiers on the slopes.

Keywords: alpine skiing, training, beginners, management

Introduction

Since ancient times, humans have needed to improve themselves and their surroundings, aiming to accomplish tasks with minimal energy, time, and materials. Consequently, there has been a growing research interest in how individuals interact with their environment, organize their work based on new knowledge, and manage it efficiently (Živanović et al, 2003). In everyday practice, without theoretical consideration, i.e., the theoretical foundation of the issue, there is no practical elaboration of the phenomenon of organization and management in ski schools ("there is no practice without theory").

Contemporary sports exhibit all the characteristics of a societal phenomenon that receives considerable attention and involves numerous scientific and political factors. In the current sports practice in our context, the principles and values of modern management, i.e., organization and management in organizations, are still insufficiently affirmed. That is particularly pronounced in small sports organizations, where work is primarily based on routine (Nešić, 2007).

Curiosity, motivation, and personal affinity (interest) of the authors have driven them to acquaint future and current skiing and snowboarding instructors and coaches, as well as all those interested, with models of organization and management (management) in ski and snowboard schools. This work aims to provide a closer explanation of existing knowledge and to adopt new knowledge about the issue of organization and management, i.e., leadership in ski schools. The researched topic is current but, to some extent, insufficiently explored, which is why this work systematically organizes existing knowledge and the facts we have arrived at through theoretical consideration (Miltojević, 2008). Stijepović and colleagues (2017) presented ski and snowboard schools in Serbian ski centers in their professional work. The work addresses the historical development of skiing in four ski centers and the model of human resource engagement without explaining other factors of organization and management in sports institutions. They further emphasize that through the analysis of the past, ski and snowboard schools are vital drivers of tourism and the leading promoters of winter ski centers. Proper organization of ski and snowboard schools enhances the quality of the center itself and the development of free lifestyle styles. The organization of schools in centers is different and depends on the geographical, tourist, hospitality, and ambient position of a ski center.

Bartoluci and Škorić (2009) state that direct economic effects are realized in tourist or sports enterprises based on the sale of sports and recreational services, which is also the case with Ski Schools. They are realized as the difference between income and costs of sports services and are measurable in every tourist or sports organization.

Through theoretical and applied analysis, we have determined various directions in the methodology of teaching skiing in ski schools, that include., recreational, competitive, and combined. Sometimes, the ski school is considered an "open system" where the methodology is adapted to the participant's abilities, motivations, and desires. The work program should encompass basic pedagogical and didactic postulates and be oriented towards achieving

maximum success for talented individuals and those who require more time and attempts to achieve maximum results (Ropert, 2022).

The authors of this work possess significant creative potential and undoubtedly have professional competence and years of experience in teaching beginners in skiing and also theoretical knowledge. The definition of this topic is undoubtedly the result of a deep understanding of the problem in practice and the authors' desire to recognize and emphasize what is essential. The existing author's notes and direct experience in working on the mentioned topic have significantly contributed to forming this work's immediate goal and outcome. Furthermore, practical contribution of this work serves as a foundation for future research and discussions in the professional community, i.e., for those with a clear vision and the desire to realize it.

Definition of the Concept and Problem Statement

The objective of defining the functioning by various authors was to arrive at common attributes for a more precise definition of organization. The term "organization" originates from the Latin word "organisatio" signifying the integration of individual parts (organs) into a whole, making the entity capable of functioning. In a broader sense, organization entails human collaboration to fulfill specific tasks or duties. Vilotijević et al. (2018:20) defines an organization as the "science of principles for achieving optimal results in the realization of set goals and tasks, i.e., an organized entity of various elements". Therefore, an organization molds individuals to meet their needs and adapt to their environment. Thus, this definition can be fully incorporated into the management of ski schools.

Ski school is a sports organization registered to provide instructional services for skiing. It is established as a legal entity or entrepreneur, e.g., Ltd. (Law on Public Ski Resorts, 2006).

An individual who instructs beginners in skiing is a Ski Instructor or Teacher (levels I, II, III, and IV). They are certified to work in ski schools and possess a qualification certificate and a valid work permit (Savić & Stijepović, 2018).

In the cybernetic sense, management involves transitioning a system from one state to another (from one level to another), i.e., control actions to achieve higher, optimal outcomes. Management essentially revolves around the circulation of information. Management is realized through decision-making that executes predetermined school objectives (adapted from Vilotijević et al., 2018:24,25).

Consequently, Ski Schools can be regarded as open systems subject to changes in organization and management. They fall under the category of simple organizations with a specific mission and objectives, where a single individual, a manager or director, maintains direct contact with all staff (Tomić, 2006). Together, they constitute a team that should function positively in practice, specifically within registered ski centers.

The problem addressed in this paper focuses on presenting and explaining organizational forms of management and administration (management) in ski schools. As such, the program of a ski school should be cohesive and aligned with the National Ski School,

encompassing instructions, turning techniques, methodological bases for training, corrective exercises, and professional terminology.

Objective and Outcomes

This professional paper aims to present the principal elements of organization (manifestations and models) and management in registered Ski Schools. Additionally, the objective can be focused on the immediate practical application of this theoretical exploration, acquainting professionals with managerial concepts in the realm of ski school management, along with proposing measures for improving management and organization in future work.

The set objectives of this paper will fully address the defined thematic scope and provide the fundamental guidelines and signposts for the potential organization and implementation of ski schools in day-to-day practice within ski centers.

The outcomes of this paper are seen in the necessity of such theoretical investigations, primarily due to the need for a proper approach to effective theoretical and practical training of beginners on the terrain, considering their outcomes and impacts in immediate practice. Moreover, such theoretical works aid in discerning the positive and negative aspects of the proposed organizational procedures (models and manifestations) and management in ski schools. The ultimate outcome of this theoretical exploration can also be perceived as a type of professional assistance and guidance for all individuals employed and users in ski school.

Thus, a well-examined, respected, and analyzed historical perspective of ski school operations undeniably allows us to make fewer errors in future professional endeavors.

Therefore, the practical value framework of this theoretical research is reflected in several spheres: social, media, marketing, health and tourism. Individually, each of them promotes an upgrades skiing and accompanying ski industry, that means in practice is very hard to define which of them is the most important. That is why it is necessary to look at them in an interdisciplinary way, because it is only when they are given that they make their full contribution.

Organization and Management in Ski Schools

In everyday practice, we encounter three manifestations of a simple organizational structure, among which ski schools fall ("divisional" and "combined") (Tomić, 2006). These are 1) organizations where possibilities and objectives are consciously limited by organizational plans - ski schools; 2) sports organizations - ski schools, where the owner's or founder's decision involves appropriate organizational structure design; and 3) an autocratic management approach (abuse of authority) and management by organization managers. Besides organizational structure, one must familiarize oneself with practical work models.

Based on years of professional experience and personal motivation, the authors propose, elaborate on, and present a working model with five factors in the organization and functioning of ski schools. These are: 1) the mission, goals, and tasks of the Ski School, 2) the

Ski School structure, 3) human resources in the Ski School, 4) Ski School processes, and 5) Ski School management (Tomić, 2006).

Mission, goals, and tasks: The mission of a ski school pertains to its fundamental purpose of existence, which involves establishing a quality school tailored to the participants, and their environment, where all learn and progress. The ski school program should facilitate individual advancement aligned with abilities, interests, and possibilities. Alongside the educational aspect, the program also includes an educative dimension, aiming to create a safe, pleasant, and stimulating environment. The program is stimulating, offering freedom of movement and adaptation and continuous professional development for instructors and trainers (Ropret, 2022:145). The school's objective is an individual or group-oriented target: securing ample participants, employing instructors, positive financial transactions (material gain), marketing activities, quality service provision, and ski equipment rental. Hence, the ultimate goal of the ski school is thriving and secure training. The school's task also involves promoting educational components, addressing the need for new knowledge, and continuous employee professional development (Savić & Stijepović, 2018).

Structure: The structure of a ski and snowboarding school pertains to its internal organization and relationships along vertical and horizontal lines, i.e., division of labor and responsibilities within the school, all aimed at achieving personal and collective tasks and objectives. The school's structure also concerns organizational methods, employee competencies, the school's program, and organizational and production technical conditions. It involves the division of tasks and responsibilities, mainly expressed through specialization of tasks and coordination of all employees (Tomić, 2006).

Human resources: These constitute subjects and objects of action and work. Subjects include all individuals employed in the ski school. It is important to emphasize that only ski instructors engaged by the ski school can conduct skiing instruction on the ski slopes. A skiing instructor is a person engaged in teaching skiing and specialized winter sports, holding the appropriate qualifications of a skiing instructor, teacher, or coach per the law governing the sports field. They also possess a valid license the relevant sports association issued, i.e., a "work permit" (Torlaković et al., 2014). They must adhere to high standards organizationally, technically, and methodologically. In the collaborative work with ski school participants, a skiing instructor applies a proper methodological approach in selecting the best methodical exercises that aid in acquiring elements of skiing technique. Additionally, they promptly identify and correct observed errors in the execution of assigned exercises and elements (Kačer et al., 2014).

Apart from instructors, human resources within schools also include employees in management (director, finance sector), marketing personnel (PR), individuals involved in scheduling instructor hours, and animators responsible for promotion, diploma awarding, and the enjoyable aspect of school activities.

Processes: In the context of a ski school, processes pertain to directing activities and tasks toward goal achievement. Primary processes in a ski school relate to its core activity, i.e.,

participant training (individual, group, full-day ski school). Primary objectives include clearly defined school goals and tasks ("risk management" and addressing operational "bottlenecks"). Risk management is commonly defined in practice as the fundamental function of management, involving assessing and monitoring risks and preparing the organization for potential impacts and opportunities to prevent them. Process management in ski schools is entrusted to managers, other professionals, and experts from various fields. The ski school must contract with Ski Resorts to provide skiing training services. To use ski resorts, it must adhere to stipulated conditions and procedures outlined in the contract. According to the contract, it also bears specific responsibilities it must uphold during its operations. Secondary processes concern activities supporting the core activity, organization, and management, including marketing, finance (financial transactions), administration (administrative structure - secretarial tasks), facility functions, obligations towards partners, and the ski school's environmental basis.

Ski School Management: This relates to activities for effective and successful ski school management. It involves the actions of managers (directors, managers) with the aim of the organization's, i.e., ski school's, efficient functioning. In practice, these are the responsibilities of the ski school owner (school director) and their deputies for specific areas: teaching, scheduling instructors, ski and equipment servicing, on-slope instructor work, and other tasks. The ski school director is directly responsible for implementing the annual work plan and exercising complete control over the ski school. They advocate for teamwork, demonstrate understanding towards the employees, and possess the ability to motivate them effectively. They are resolute and confident in decision-making and have a deep understanding of their staff, serving as the captain of their team. School directors must possess a certain level of authority among their employees, expressed through their knowledge and capabilities (status in the management hierarchy). Ski school management is closely connected to the marketing function, which is monetized through results and service provision in the skiing market. The outcome of management is the realization of the "membership function," directly related to increasing the number of participants and ski school members. Market and competition analysis are also part of ski school management duties.

We emphasize that ski schools constitute a social group existing to fulfill the needs of participants, the school's users (Nešić, 2007). Thus, the direct functioning of the ski school is realized through adherence to "safety organizational training rules" and implementation of the "National Ski School" program, as well as rules applicable in ski centers (Ropert, 2018). The ski school's program must encompass fundamental didactic-methodological teaching principles, with content that is tailored and adapted to the school's participants.

Conclusion

The necessity of such theoretical explorations fundamentally arises from the need to approach the successful theoretical and practical training of beginners on the field correctly, considering its outcomes and effects in immediate practice. Additionally, professional articles of this nature aid us in practice to better discern what aspects of the ski school's organized

procedures and management have been positive or negative. The requirement for this work also partly stems from clarifying prior theoretical ambiguities. Hence, the significance of this work is implemented in presenting and explaining procedures for organizing, managing, and directing ski schools. From the perspective of sports organization activities, i.e., ski schools, they should develop their "market strategy," aligning their activities with user needs.

Ski schools should function as autonomous and creative organizations with clearly defined goals, tasks, and work programs. They should function as well-organized teams, with a competent and quality school director-manager at the helm, possessing authority as an organizational subject. This director-manager indirectly advances positive business obligations, creates a favorable work atmosphere, motivates employees, fosters genuine camaraderie and friendly relationships between employees and participants – the ski school's clients – and displays creativity in their work. The accurate measure of a ski school director's or owner's performance is their ability to make correct, financially justified management decisions. When choosing and defining their operational strategy, schools should also consider "environmental analysis" (a dynamic environment – other schools and sports organizations at the ski resort). Therefore, ski school management must take the initiative and action to achieve set objectives.

Particular attention should be paid to general management procedures, i.e., safety measures and potential risks in conducting business operations (preserving assets and individuals). Thus, ski schools should use ski slopes for skiing instruction only under conditions that ensure safety for participants and other skiers, as stipulated by ski resort regulations. To attain high levels of skiing skill instruction, ski instructors and trainers should adhere to the "Code of Ethics and Conduct Rules" and consistently work on their improvement (in the realm of ski equipment, modern techniques, and methodology). Ski schools should consistently operate under the Law on Sport and its accompanying regulations and protocols.

Clearly defined goals and tasks of ski schools as complex profit-oriented entities are essential for achieving positive outcomes. When defining objectives, their "hierarchy" must be unequivocally established, ranking them by importance and realization timeline. Such organizational and management practices will undoubtedly yield practical results. The analysis of this research has substantiated the validity of such investigations.

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