

Analysis of the organizational performance of the Togolese handball federation

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the analysis of the organizational performance of the Togolese handball federation. To carry out this research and verify the hypothesis according to which the ineffective organizational management of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) negatively influences its performance and the achievement of its results, we randomly chose one hundred (100) players (es) having the license and experience in the practice of handball and eight (08) club managers who responded to our questionnaires. We also carried out a semi-structured interview with four (04) members of the FTHB executive office. To properly analyze the results, Mathieu WINAND's model (2009) relates to the evaluation of the performance of sports federations through its four axes, namely: purposes axis, mobilizable resources axis, internal organization axis and key services axis. The hypothesis formulated was verified, because of the organizational shortcomings, in particular the failure to define clear and measurable objectives, the absence of communication of objectives to players and other stakeholders, the inadequacy of the objectives and goals pursued and the unanimity members of the executive office in decision-making; Added to this is the poor use of resources, insufficient support from public authorities and sponsors, and difficulties in accessing quality sports infrastructure and equipment.

Keywords: Organizational Performance; Sports Federation; Executive Board Members; License; Players

1. Introduction

Sport is a codified, regulated, and institutionalized human activity. It occupies a prominent place in human life (Akouété, 2012, p. 10). According to Adolehoume (2010), for some, physical and sporting activity is an instinctive need; for others, it is also an integral part of know-how, social skills, education, and culture. Thus, throughout history, several conceptions of sporting practice have been observed. Today, sport has even become a business. It is practically a truism to say so. In today's globalized society, there is a genuine social movement which, as Jacques Rooge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), points out, "has the power to offer all generations, and especially young people, the chance to lead not only a healthier, more balanced life, but also a better life, a life with more meaning" (Adolehoume, 2010, p. 8). The development of sport is of interest not only to the State and federations but also to civil society, and both public and private companies. The State has opted for a model of sports funding through the Ministry of Sports and Physical Education, which supports sports associations and organizations. Recognized as public entities serving the general interest, national sports federations are assigned a public service mission for sport, hence the delegation of power conferred upon them by the public authorities. It should be noted, however, that the institutional actors involved in sports organizations appear more divided regarding the objectives of the sport and the means implemented to achieve

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them (Gasparini, 1997). Sporting success requires good organization and efficient functioning of federations (Moreau, 2003), hence the importance of organizational performance. As Winand (2009) points out, in the sporting world, the word "performance" is inevitably associated with an athlete's athletic achievement. Everyone can judge their level of success in their sport. Their victories and medals are all indicators that allow them to form an opinion. Similarly, organizations seek to improve their performance by achieving their strategic objectives. Managers have understood this and use various tools to evaluate their resources, processes, and results. These tools allow them to positively orient their organization toward its strategic objectives and ensure its success. This performance management relies, in particular, on its evaluation within an organization through indicators that measure the achievement of its objectives, allowing managers to adjust their actions or processes if they are not meeting them (Winand, 2009, p. 3). Performance is increasingly emphasized in organizations (Legrand, 2015, p. 1). According to Legrand (2015), organizations today are subject to an inescapable race for performance, which translates into shorter deadlines, the need to constantly react to poorly controlled events, the development of urgency as a mode of operation, project-based and objective-based management, an accelerated pace of organizational and technical changes, and information overload due to the spread of information and communication technologies worldwide, and particularly in Africa.

Thus, Law No. 2011-017 of June 16, 2011, establishing the charter for physical and sporting activities in Togo, sets out general provisions for the practice of physical and sporting activities, the role of the State and other public entities, the structures of the sports movement, the affiliation of sports federations to the Togolese National Olympic Committee (CNOT), and the delegation of authority from the Ministry of Sports to the sports federations, which are entrusted with the mission of developing sport through districts and leagues. The Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB), established in 1968, is responsible for the organization, development, and oversight of handball throughout the national territory, at both the amateur and professional levels. Its vision is to be a catalyst for Togo's visibility through a culture of excellence in handball. Like other Francophone African countries, the development of physical and sporting activities in Togo is limited (Houedakor, 2010, p. 16). Today, Togolese handball seems to struggle to develop and establish itself regionally, continentally, and internationally. For several years now, despite the succession of presidents and executive boards, one of the difficulties facing the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB), which negatively impacts the performance of athletes both nationally and internationally, lies in personnel, governance, and organizational management issues. These recurring difficulties have created deep divisions and a climate of discord among stakeholders, with the result that the FTHB's diverse and multifaceted volunteers are often marginalized. Given all of the above, the question arises: what is the link between the organizational inefficiency of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB)? From this question, we posit that the inefficiency of the FTHB's organizational performance is linked to the management of the federation's stakeholders.

The 1970s and 1980s were pivotal years for the world of sport as a whole. It faced the diversification of activities, the involvement of commercial actors, the rise of professional sport, and the development of sport practiced outside the traditional structures of sports federations.

Thus, the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB), which had experienced its golden age in the 1970s with several titles and cups won through its participation in international competitions, saw Togo crowned champion of the Zone 4 tournament of the Supreme Council of African Sport in 1972, winning the Bruno Garcia Trophy ahead of Benin, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Niger, and Nigeria. This tournament marked the official birth of the African Handball Confederation (CAHB). In 1976, Togo won the gold medal at the first ECOWAS Games, defeating Ivory Coast in the final. In 1979, prior to the administrative reforms that Togolese sport underwent, the ASFOSA club finished second in the first African Champions Cup in Egypt. Togo participated in the African Nations Championships in 1974 in Tunis, in 1976 in Algiers, and in 1978 in Brazzaville (source: FTHB). However, after these years of glory, it is clear that the Togolese Handball Federation has lagged behind in truly committing to its responsibilities at the level of traditional handball and achieving its stated goal of developing both professional and amateur handball. In fact, it has disappeared from the competitive scene. This is due to several reasons, including the lack of an appropriate sports policy, insufficient financial resources, lack of support for clubs and coaches, lack of sports infrastructure, lack of competitions, and lack of motivation among the players. This has negatively impacted the athletes' performances both nationally and internationally. Today, the FTHB does not have a national team, but rather a collection of players who manage without competitive opportunities (FTHB Secretary General, interview). Indeed, at the Zone 3 Games of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa, held in Lomé, Togo, in December 2023, the women's team finished last in their group and last overall. The same fate befell the senior men's national team at the 13th African Games in Ghana in March 2024, where they finished last in their group and last out of the eight teams competing. While all countries are striving to improve the quality of play by using modern playing surfaces and indoor facilities, Togo still holds its major competitions on a single, uncovered tarmac court. It is worth noting the lack of qualified coaches and the fact that handball is practiced almost exclusively in the Lomé Golfe league, which currently manages thirteen clubs. The other leagues have only two or three clubs, and these clubs hardly organize any competitions. The lack of local infrastructure

for clubs and schools, as well as suitable playing areas for official competitions, is a significant problem. We are witnessing a gradual decline in the number of existing clubs due to a lack of coaches and financial resources, a decrease in the number of women's teams, and very few registered players and members due to a lack of funding. According to Makou (2016), this situation clearly illustrates the challenges faced by national federations in general. The federation struggles to remain viable due to its very limited operating resources, financial instability, the high cost of its fees, and, above all, mismanagement. The results are far from satisfactory, considering the overall performance of the national team across all its categories. Thus, Togolese handball appears to be failing to fulfill its development mission, whereas organizational performance should link action, results, and success. In this research, the term "FTHB performance" refers to the outcome of an action, thus encompassing both its effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is an organization's capacity to achieve its set objectives, while efficiency is the ratio between the resources used and the results obtained (Bourguignon, 1995). The central question is: how does the FTHB maximize the use of its resources to achieve the best results? Based on this question, we posit that the inability to mobilize resources and the poor utilization of resources allocated to the FTHB by its stakeholders explain the poor results obtained.

The objectives of this article are, firstly, to analyze the degree to which the objectives set by the FTHB have been achieved, and secondly, to examine the FTHB's use of resources and their impact on the results obtained. To achieve this, we will use the following methodology.

2. Methodological approach

Before proceeding with the analysis of the results, it is essential to clarify the nature of this research, which will guide all the methodological approaches adopted to meet the established objectives.

Our study is both quantitative and qualitative, providing an in-depth analysis of the organizational performance of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB).

The survey population includes key stakeholders involved in handball in Togo, namely: certain officials from the Ministry of Sports, members of the FTHB Executive Committee, club officials, and players from handball clubs affiliated with the FTHB.

Two sampling methods are used for this study. The first is the probabilistic method, which relies on chance and is well-suited for collecting quantitative data from the players and club officials to whom the questionnaire is addressed. The non-probabilistic method using the reasoned choice technique allowed us to collect qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with members of the FTHB executive committee and certain officials from the Ministry of Sport.

The sample distribution is shown in the table below.

Table 1 Distribution of the size of the surveyed population according to the categories of stakeholders

Categories of actors	Surveyed numbers
Athletes (Players)	100
Club leaders	08
Members of FTHB Executive Board	04
Total	112

The techniques used here are document analysis, questionnaire surveys, and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were used for athletes and members of the FTHB executive committee. Semi-structured interviews were used for club leaders and some members of the FTHB executive committee. The tools used were reading sheets, questionnaires, and interview guides.

This methodology allowed us to obtain the following results:

3. Results

The results of our work are presented along three lines inspired by the work of Winand (2009).

Objectives

Objectives to be achieved and strategies of Togolese Handball Federation

Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) faces several major challenges that hinder the achievement of its objectives and the implementation of its strategies. These challenges are related to various aspects of management, training, and finance, affecting the federation's capacity to develop and thrive.

Table 2 above concerns the results related to the achievement of the federation's objectives.

Table 2 Practitioners' perspectives on the management and achievement of FTHB objectives

Objectifs	Terms and conditions	Staff	Proportion in %
Defining clear and measurable objectives for the development of handball	Yes	17	17.00%
	No	83	83.00%
Effective communication of objectives to players and other stakeholders	Always	0	0.00%
	Often	5	5.00%
	Sometimes	4	4.00%
	Rarely	8	8.00%
	Never	83	83.00%
Implementation of concrete actions to achieve the defined objectives	Always	5	5.00%
	Often	4	4.00%
	Sometimes	10	10.00%
	Rarely	40	40.00%
	Never	41	41.00%
Togolese handball has made significant progress in recent years	Quite a bit	0	0.00%
	Not really	10	10.00%
	Not at all	90	90.00%

Source: Field data, August 2025

Analysis of this table reveals that a large majority of respondents, 83%, believe that the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) has not established clear and measurable objectives for the development of Togolese handball. Regarding the communication of objectives, 83% of handball players attest that effective communication of objectives to players and other stakeholders is non-existent. Only 5% of handball players indicate that objectives are frequently communicated. Furthermore, 40% and 41% of respondents believe that concrete actions to achieve the defined objectives are rarely or never implemented, respectively. Concerning the progress of Togolese handball in recent years, 90% of respondents agree that there has been no progress at all. Indeed, the health crisis caused by COVID-19 interrupted competitions and severely impacted the continuity of sporting activities. Teams had to start from scratch after the pandemic, and this exacerbated the problem of aging teams, particularly in the youth categories. A federation member stated: "The main challenge we faced in achieving these objectives, as I said earlier, was the COVID-19 health crisis, which was the initial obstacle. [...] The restart was difficult simply because the teams had become very old." (Source: interview with a federation official).

Furthermore, the interviews revealed significant organizational shortcomings, such as the lack of training for handball stakeholders and the voluntary nature of positions within the federation. The absence of formal qualifications for members of the executive committee leads to competence issues, and the voluntary nature of the positions limits the

commitment and effectiveness of sports officials, as confirmed by a federation member: "There is this problem of training for handball stakeholders and handball managers." There is also the issue of availability. [...] People have activities they do. They are absorbed in activities that sustain them." (Source: interview with a federation member).

Having examined the challenges facing the federation, it is crucial to consider another fundamental aspect of its activity: participation in competitions, which is one of the federation's objectives.

Table 3 Summary of National Championships from 2016 to 2025 in Togo

Years	Championships
2016	Championship effectiveness
2017	No championship
2018	Championship status
2019	No championship
2020	No championship (COVID-19 year)
2021	No championship (COVID-19 year)
2022	No championship
2023	No championship
2024	No championship
2025	No championship

Table 3 shows that from 2016 to 2025; the Tunisian Handball Federation (FTHB) organized only two national championships (2016 and 2018). The absence of national championships in 2020 and 2021 was due to COVID-19. This reveals the irregularity of the championships at the FTHB level.

However, there is no structured program for identifying and supporting sporting talent. Initiatives to prepare the next generation are informal and are neither centralized nor systematized. This is confirmed by a member of the federation, who stated: "We have no program; certain individuals train young athletes to prepare the next generation for the teams, but no talent identification system exists" (Source: interview with a federation member).

Furthermore, the selection criteria for athletes on the national teams are not formally established, which can lead to a degree of subjectivity. Furthermore, there are no structured support mechanisms for promising athletes, thus limiting their development and retention, as one interviewee attests: "The selection criteria are not formally established; the coaches have their own criteria and sometimes identify athletes subjectively when selecting national teams. Support mechanisms for promising athletes? There aren't any" (Source: interview with a federation member).

Moreover, the interviews reveal that the federation has not implemented any specific measures to attract and retain new members. While some individuals take personal initiatives to promote handball, a clear federal strategy for this task is lacking. As one interviewee explains in his statement: "No measures are being taken. [...] Some have taken the good initiative of going to areas where there are currently handball courts." [...] Promotion was carried out at the club level so that clubs could meet and participate in informal competitions. (Source: interview with a federation member)

After examining the objectives to be achieved, it is essential to focus on resource mobilization and management, which is a central issue for ensuring the sustainability and development of handball in Togo, linked to the achievement of these objectives.

3.1. Resource mobilizable area: human, financial, and logistical

Resource Availability and Management at the FTHB

Table 4 presents a summary of information relating to resource availability and management at the FTHB.

Table 4 reveals that the majority of handball players (53%) believe that adequate human and financial resources are completely lacking for the proper execution of their duties. For 30% of respondents, these resources are simply not available at the Tunisian Handball Federation (FTHB). Regarding the efficiency and transparency of resource allocation, 82% of respondents state that resources are rarely or never used efficiently and transparently. Furthermore, support from public authorities and sponsors is also considered insufficient, with 63% of respondents reporting that this support is either limited or non-existent. Moreover, difficulties in accessing quality sports infrastructure and equipment are a major problem for the development of handball, according to 80% of the players surveyed.

Table 4 Resource availability and management at FTHB according to participants

Resource availability and management	Terms and conditions	Staff	Proportion in %
FTHB has sufficient human and financial resources to properly carry out its missions.	Quite	7	7.00%
	Enough.	10	10.00%
	Not really.	30	30.00%
	Not at all	53	53.00%
Efficient and transparent use of resources	Always	3	3.00%
	Often	5	5.00%
	Sometimes	10	10.00%
	Rarely	20	20.00%
	Never	62	62.00%
Adequate support for the FTHB from public authorities and sponsors	Absolutely	20	20.00%
	Quite a bit	17	17.00%
	Not really	40	40.00%
	Not at all	23	23.00%
Existence of difficulties in accessing quality sports infrastructure or equipment	Always	60	60.00%
	Often	20	20.00%
	Sometimes	9	9.00%
	Rarely	5	5.00%
	Never	6	6.00%

Source: Field data, August 2025

3.2. Impact of resource use on outcomes

The impact of resource use on outcomes was assessed using simple logistic regression. The independent variables were data related to resource use, and the dependent variables were data related to the final results. The results of this survey are presented in Table 4.

Table 5 Impact of resource use on outcomes

Independent variables	Dependent variables	Coefficient	P
Sufficient human and financial resources are available.	Significant progress in Togolese handball	-0.142	0.002
	Satisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives	-0.35	0.035
	Satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB	-1.79	0.030
Adequate financial support from the FTHB	Significant progress in Togolese handball	-0.45	0.005
	Satisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives	-1.18	0.000
	Satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB	-3.07	0.017
Assistance to clubs for mobilizing additional resources	Significant progress in Togolese handball	-1.44	0.006
	Satisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives	-2.92	0.091
	Satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB	-2.13	0.046
Transparent and responsible use of resources by the FTHB	Transparent and responsible use of resources by the FTHB	-2.43	0.026
	Transparent and responsible use of resources by the FTHB	-1.57	0.134
	Transparent and responsible use of resources by the FTHB	-3.82	0.048
Difficulties accessing quality sports infrastructure or equipment	Significant progress in Togolese handball	-3.33	0.004
	Satisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives	-2.83	0.011
	Satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB	-3.04	0.007

Source: Field data and analysis with Stata 15, 2025

Analysis of Table V shows that the existence of sufficient human and financial resources has significant negative effects on the progress of Togolese handball, satisfaction with the achievement of objectives, and the perceived quality of services. The negative coefficients and probability values show that the noted insufficiency of human and financial resources leads to slow progress in handball, dissatisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives, and dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB (Togolese Handball Federation).

Adequate financial support from the FTHB is also negatively associated with the progress of handball, satisfaction with the achievement of objectives, and the quality of services. The significant negative coefficients and probability values show that the lack of financial support has negative repercussions on the progress of handball, satisfaction with the level of achievement of objectives, and satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB.

Support for clubs to mobilize Additional resources show a negative association with handball development and satisfaction with service quality (). These results reveal that a lack of support for clubs in mobilizing additional resources has a negative impact on handball development and satisfaction with service quality.

Transparent and responsible resource use is significantly linked to a decrease in development and service quality (). This indicates that a lack of transparency and accountability in resource management negatively affects handball development and satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB.

Difficulties accessing quality sports infrastructure or equipment have significant negative effects on development, satisfaction with goal achievement, and service quality (). The negative coefficients and highly significant P values reveal the negative impact of difficulties accessing quality sports infrastructure or equipment on handball development, satisfaction with the level of goal achievement, and satisfaction with the quality of services offered by the FTHB.

3.3. Resources

Resource management at the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) faces enormous challenges that limit the proper functioning of the FTHB and the development of Togolese handball.

Major challenges include issues with collegial governance and a lack of adequate training for members of the executive committee. Participatory management is difficult to implement, and volunteer training is insufficient. This situation is confirmed by the words of a federation member: "The main problem is training. People need to be trained; seminars need to be held so that everyone knows what they have to do in their position. The main challenge is staff training." (Source: interview with a federation member)

Regarding resource mobilization, the main source of funding is the subsidy from the Ministry of Sports and Recreation, which was recently increased to 10 million CFA francs. Attempts to obtain private sponsors have so far been unsuccessful. This is what one interviewee stated: "The main financial resources of the FTHB's funding comes exclusively from subsidies granted by the Ministry of Sports and Recreation. Previously associated sponsors have withdrawn. (Source: interview with a member of the federation).

Although efforts are being made to solicit sponsors and patrons, the results are disappointing. These efforts have not secured significant additional funding. "We sent letters to over a hundred companies, but we didn't get any significant positive results." (Source: interview with a federation member). Another member elaborated further: "Financially, the main resource, if not the only one, is the government subsidies. So, unlike our neighboring countries where we've learned that subsidies are at a certain level, the government subsidy granted to the Togolese Handball Federation is the same as a neighboring country's subsidy for a single club. What a single club receives in Benin is what we have for the entire federation to manage all the teams and all the handball-related institutions in Togo. You can see the difference." When we took over the federation, the state subsidy was 5 million. That's what we were granted. But now, and for the past two years, the subsidies we receive have doubled to 10 million. This would mean that the president can't give more than she has. She can't do more if she doesn't have more resources" (Source: interview with a federation member).

Regarding financial management, it's important to note the existence of a centralized financial decision-making process. The information gathered reveals that expenditures are centralized, with the president as the primary authorizing officer. This situation can lead to a lack of transparency, rigor, and efficiency in fund management. This situation is confirmed by the interviewee's statement: "Financial management is centralized; the president is the sole authorizing officer. It's necessary to develop an administrative and financial management manual for greater transparency." (Source: Interview with a federation member).

Regarding the availability of logistical resources, the interviews revealed that the FTHB (Togo Handball Federation) only has one main open playing field and some peripheral fields. The lack of covered facilities limits its capacity to host major competitions. As one official stated, "Togo is the only country in the sub-region that does not yet have a covered playing surface, which exposes events to inclement weather." (Source: Interview with a federation member).

Furthermore, the existing facilities are considered inadequate for the federation's needs. The ongoing work to cover the main field is an attempt to address this situation, but further improvements are needed to meet international standards, as one interviewee stated: "The facilities are inadequate for the FTHB's needs." The municipal stadium pitch is currently being covered, but there are still steps to be taken to meet the standards" (Source: interview with a federation member).

If resource management at the FTHB reveals significant challenges that hinder its operation and the development of handball in Togo, it is crucial to examine how sports and non-sports services, as well as the development of external relations, are structured.

3.4. Internal organization of FTHB

This area concerns the cohesion and involvement of federation stakeholders, as well as internal governance.

3.4.1. Internal Organization of the FTHB according to federation officials

Table 6 presents the perceptions of club officials regarding the internal organization of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB).

Table 6 Internal organization of FTHB according to federation officials

Internal organization	Terms and conditions	Goals	Proportion in %
Effective collaboration between the FTHB and handball clubs	Oui	00	0.00%
	Non	08	100.00%
Fluid and transparent communication between FTHB and clubs	Oui	00	0.00%
	Non	08	100.00%
Involvement of handball clubs in decision-making processes of FTHB	Oui	00	0.00%
	Non	08	100.00%
Taking into account the needs and concerns of clubs in the decisions of the FTHB	Oui	00	0.00%
	Non	08	100.00%
Difficulties exist regarding collaboration between clubs and FTHB.	Oui	08	100.00%
	Non	00	0.00%

Source: Field data, August 2025

Analysis of Table 7 shows that collaboration between the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) and handball clubs is perceived as completely non-existent by 100% of officials. All respondents (100%) state that there is no fluid and transparent communication between the FTHB and the clubs. Club involvement in FTHB decision-making processes is also absent, according to 100% of officials. Similarly, it is noted that the needs and concerns of the clubs are not taken into account in FTHB decisions, with all respondents unanimously confirming this lack of consideration. All officials (100%) acknowledge the existence of difficulties in collaboration between the clubs and the FTHB.

3.5. Governance and Decision-Making within the FTHB

The Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) faces significant challenges in governance and decision-making processes, according to information gathered from federation members. Although the governance structure seems adequate in theory, as one of our interviewees testifies: "We have an executive board composed of seven members. These seven members were elected by the General Assembly held in 2021. Besides the members of the executive board, which includes a president, two vice-presidents, a general secretary, an assistant general secretary, a treasurer, and an assistant treasurer, we have committees. We have standing committees, and these committees allow us to work together with the Federation in organizing competitions and participating in events. There is the medical committee, the technical department, because we have an appointed technical director. We also have the Beach Handball committee and the Women's committee. In short, all these committees were established to decentralize the work so that everyone can contribute to building the organization. We don't have permanent volunteers. Volunteers are called upon on a case-by-case basis." When there's a competition, volunteers are solicited and recruited from within the clubs, and it works out quite well. The Federation has no employees. Currently, the Federation has absolutely no employees. In any case, we couldn't afford to have an employee. When I say no employees, I mean someone with a formal contract, someone with a specific job title, no. But we do have contractors we hire when we need them. If there's anyone the Federation doesn't pay, it's perhaps the person who looks after the grounds and the facilities there. He's the only person, but you can't really call it a salary. However, this practice reveals substantial shortcomings that affect its operation. Indeed, a major problem identified is the lack of a permanent secretariat. This situation creates real operational problems for the Federation, which is forced to seek stopgap solutions such as recruiting volunteers, despite all the consequences this entails. This is what a federation member interviewed emphasized in these remarks: "Administrative governance is currently facing a major challenge. I'm the one who manages the administrative side, so the biggest problem is that we don't have a permanent secretariat, we don't have an executive secretariat. We only have volunteers who handle the secretarial work" (source: interview with a federation member).

This situation leads to delays in processing files and correspondence, and a general inefficiency in the federation's day-to-day operations. Volunteers have to juggle their jobs with their federation duties, which negatively impacts the regularity and quality of the administrative work.

Furthermore, the FTHB's decision-making process also suffers from several flaws that negatively impact the effectiveness of decision-making. Indeed, a clear example is the existence of conflicts of interest that exacerbate tensions within the federation. This is what one interviewee noted, stating: "When a decision is made, especially one that is more or less tailor-made for a specific purpose, it can cause problems" (source: interview with a federation member).

In addition, the non-participation of all members in decision-making is also frequent. The regular absence of some members from meetings complicates formal and effective decision-making, given that the quorum required to adopt decisions is difficult to reach. This situation is confirmed by a federation member with the following statement: "There are seven of us (7)." Normally, we should have four votes for a decision, but we never have that, because some members aren't always present" (source: interview with a federation member).

It should also be noted that bodies like the federal council and general assemblies, which should play a key role in governance, are not properly implemented, as one member noted: "It should be noted that the federal council and annual and/or extraordinary general assemblies exist but are not implemented" (source: interview with a federation member).

The objectives of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) include the organization and development of handball at both the amateur and professional levels. However, in practice, the stated objectives are often contradictory to current practices, indicating a lack of transparency in the federation's concrete achievements. According to an interviewed federation member, he stated: "Our statutory objectives are what they are on paper: to organize and develop amateur and professional handball, and so on. But I must tell you that, for the moment, we are navigating blindly. The Togolese Handball Federation has been plagued for some time by minor personnel issues, compounded by a severe lack of funding for its activities. These problems are impacting the effectiveness and efficiency of achieving the federation's objectives and mission. Despite these problems, considerable effort is being made" (Source: interview with a federation member). This statement highlights a gap between theoretical objectives and operational reality, exacerbated by various problems, including funding.

In terms of progress assessment, federation members unanimously observe a stagnation in the progress made. For them, the previously defined objectives have not been achieved in any way. According to a senior official at the Tunisian Handball Federation (FTHB), progress has been virtually non-existent, comparing the current situation to a complete restart, as illustrated by the following statement: "If I were to try and say something about how we assess the progress made towards these objectives, it would be that we can't really say there has been any progress. Because I admit that handball as it stands today is no longer like handball was ten or twenty years ago. So, today, I can say that we are essentially restarting" (source: interview with a federation official). Another official echoed this sentiment, stating: "So how do we assess the progress made towards these objectives over the past few years?"

Things are declining, on the sporting front for the moment. I think we're rebuilding. We're rebuilding, we're starting over, I wouldn't say from scratch, but we're starting again at the fundamental level, at the base level." (Source: interview with a federation official). This situation indicates a significant gap between the stated ambitions and the federation's current ability to achieve its objectives. Today, no Togolese handball player makes a living from their sport. We can't talk about semi-professional or professional handball; it's amateurism, and that explains the neglect of handball in Togo. "There's no semi-professional status, nor even... professional status implies that the athlete makes a living from their sport. Semi-professional status implies that the athlete makes a living from their sport, but they work part-time, combining their sporting activity with another activity. But today, no athlete makes a living from their sport." None. None, none. It's completely amateurish, and right now, it's the club president and the club's executive committee who are working themselves to the bone to ensure the bare minimum for their club's survival. So, we're still dealing with pure and simple amateurism." The federation thus seems to be in a recovery phase, with limited progress and a critical need to strengthen its foundations and structures.

To achieve its development objectives, the FTHB faces several major challenges that are currently hindering its growth and effectiveness.

3.6. Key services of FTHB

Sports and non-sports services and development of external relations

Handball and beach handball tournaments are services that the FTHB offers, as highlighted in our interview: "We organize handball and beach handball tournaments, sometimes with specific themes" (Source: interview with a federation member). But this offering seems limited in terms of diversity and regularity. The fact that some competitions are themed indicates an attempt to address specific needs or generate interest, but this does not compensate for the lack of long-term development programs.

There is no structured program for identifying and supporting sporting talent within the FTHB (Togolese Handball Federation). This is confirmed by a member of the executive committee: "None exists. Some stakeholders train young athletes to prepare the next generation for the teams, but no talent identification system is in place" (Source: interview with a federation member). This means that young athletes do not benefit from institutionalized support to progress to higher levels of competition, which could hinder the development of elite sport in Togo.

The athlete selection criteria are vague and seem to depend on the subjective preferences of the coaches. "The selection criteria are not formally established; The coaching staff have their own criteria and sometimes subjectively identify athletes when selecting national teams" (Source: interview with a federation member). This lack of standardization could create an environment where injustice and favoritisms are perceived, thus undermining fairness and transparency in the formation of national teams.

The absence of effective promotion and partnership strategies highlights a major weakness in the FTHB's ability to mobilize external resources and integrate into international networks. "Partnership attempts have not yet been successful" (Source: interview with a federation member). This can limit funding, training, and international competition opportunities for Togolese athletes.

The key services that the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) offers its stakeholders are largely insufficient to ensure the sustainable development of handball in Togo. The lack of structured programs, clear criteria for athlete selection, and partnership strategies highlights organizational weaknesses that require urgent attention. To improve the federation's performance, reforms are needed to formalize processes, strengthen elite programs, and develop more robust external relationships.

4. Discussion

The results show a lack of clear and measurable objectives for handball development, with the majority of respondents indicating that these objectives are not defined. Communication of objectives to players and stakeholders is also considered deficient, and the implementation of concrete actions is rarely or never observed. Furthermore, the majority of respondents believe that there has been no significant progress in Togolese handball in recent years. In this regard, a member of the executive committee confirmed during our interviews, "I admit that handball as it exists today is no longer like handball was ten or twenty years ago. So, I can say that we are starting over." These observations echo the conclusions of the study by Gervais et al. (2012), which highlights that vague objectives and poor communication can hinder progress in sports federations. The perceived disorganization in the management of objectives reflects a significant deficiency in the strategic direction of the Tunisian Handball Federation (FTHB). Furthermore, the misalignment between the FTHB's objectives and the clubs' expectations is evident, reflecting disagreements between the federation and the clubs regarding development goals. This situation is corroborated by the study by Jones et al. (2011), which indicates that poorly aligned objectives can lead to general dissatisfaction among clubs and weak cohesion in sports development. Winand (2009) proposes that "objectives should be clearly stated, concrete and understandable, correspond to a degree of achievement, be achievable given available resources, be integrated and feasible within the overall project, and be time-bound, i.e., have a deadline" (Winand, 2009). An objective should therefore be "SMART": Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. (Drucker, 1954; Drucker, 1977)

The analysis shows that available human and financial resources are insufficient. Efficiency and transparency in resource use are also lacking. Support from public authorities and sponsors is insufficient, and difficulties in accessing infrastructure are evident in the results obtained. These findings confirm trends observed in other studies on sports federations, such as those by Barros et al. (2018), which highlight that the lack of adequate resources and inefficient fund management are major obstacles to the development of local sports. The study by Romero et al. (2011) reveals that institutional support and transparent resource management are crucial for improving athletic performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

The majority of respondents consider the FTHB's internal operations inefficient and collaboration with other handball stakeholders insufficient. Internal communication is perceived as deficient, and player involvement is considered low. These results are consistent with those found in the research by Silva et al. (2017), which highlights that organizational inefficiency and poor communication can significantly hinder sports development. The findings of this study also underscore the importance of good internal coordination and communication for the success of sports initiatives.

The results show that the Tunisian Handball Federation (FTHB) rarely offers a diverse range of competitions and training programs. This lack of activity and visibility is critical, as studies have shown that the quality and quantity of competitions and training programs are essential for athlete development and the growth of the sport (Schempp and Templin, 2016; Kidd, 2014). Involvement in promoting handball and partnerships with other sports organizations are also considered insufficient. The study by Turner et al. (2020) also confirms that engagement in promotion and partnerships is a key factor for the development of the sport at the national level. The absence of a service offering tailored to the needs of clubs is significantly highlighted, as noted in the study by Williams et al. (2009), which finds that diversifying services and training programs is essential for the growth and satisfaction of sports clubs.

Adequate financial support for the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) also shows a significant negative relationship with the progress of Togolese handball, satisfaction with the achievement of objectives, and satisfaction with the quality of services. These results imply that a lack of financial support affects not only the progress of sporting activities but also the perceived effectiveness of the federation and the quality of its services. Similar studies have shown that insufficient financial support can lead to organizational difficulties and a decline in the quality of sports programs (Romero et al., 2011).

Difficulties accessing quality sports infrastructure or equipment have significant negative effects on the progress of Togolese handball, satisfaction with the achievement of objectives, and the quality of services. These results imply that obstacles to accessing quality infrastructure and equipment have a major impact on performance and overall satisfaction within Togolese handball. Limited access to quality equipment is a factor that seriously compromises sporting development (Kleibert et al., 2010). According to Winand (2009), the lack of sports infrastructure or its poor quality can limit the growth in league membership or make training conditions difficult for elite athletes.

5. Conclusion

Handball is among the most popular sports for young people in Togo. Every region has at least one handball club. This is evidenced by the large number of clubs in the Lomé league, the epicentre of Togolese handball, which registers more than 10 clubs each season. However, while everything suggests that handball is thriving in Togo, the reality is quite different. An analysis of the FTHB's organizational performance reveals persistent problems within the federation, leading to its dysfunction. The documentary research, questionnaires, and interviews conducted for this study, along with the analytical model used, revealed a number of difficulties related to this dysfunction. These difficulties manifest as poor management of all organizational structures, a lack of objectives, malfunctioning committees, insufficient human and financial resources, inadequate infrastructure and equipment for the efficient practice of handball, and power struggles, positioning conflicts, and conflicts of interest among stakeholders in their relationships and interactions. The aim is to reduce the shortcomings and dysfunctions that contribute to destabilizing the development of handball. However, the working conditions of Togolese handball players are unsuitable for high-level competition. All of this reflects the precarious state of Togolese handball and, above all, the existing federal system. This system is characterized by the ineffectiveness of sports activities within the leagues.

This study aims to encourage the various stakeholders of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) to understand the necessity of everyone's involvement in organized action to achieve handball development goals in Togo. The hypotheses formulated have all been verified. In addition to organizational shortcomings, including the lack of clear and measurable objectives, the absence of communication of objectives to players and other stakeholders, the inadequacy of the objectives and goals pursued, and the unanimity of the executive committee members in decision-making, there are also the misuse of resources, insufficient support from public authorities and sponsors, and difficulties in accessing quality sports infrastructure and equipment. We can therefore confirm that the ineffective organizational management of the Togolese Handball Federation (FTHB) negatively impacts its performance and the achievement of its objectives.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

All authors acknowledge that there is no conflict of interest. They all agree with what is written in this article. In accordance with the requirements of transparency and scientific integrity, we, the authors of this study, declare that we have no conflict of interest, whether financial, commercial or otherwise, that could influence the results or interpretations of our research on initiation rites in Benin, thus guaranteeing the independence and objectivity of our work and ensuring the credibility of our conclusions.

Statement of informed consent

We obtained consent from all participants in this study.

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