

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Management System of Sports Clubs in Ethiopia

Yonas Alemayoh¹, Dr.Kesatie Legesse², Dr.Theodros Birhane³, Dr.Hailay Gebretinsae⁴, Dr.Mathivanan Dhamodharan⁵

¹Research Scholar, Department of Sport Science, Mekelle University, Ethiopia.

²Associate Professor, Mekelle University Sport Science Academy, Ethiopia.

³Assistant Professor, Mekelle University Sport Science Academy, Ethiopia.

⁴Associate Professor, Department of Management, Mekelle University, Ethiopia.

⁵Associate Professor, Mekelle University Sport Science Academy, Ethiopia.

Corresponding author: Dr.Kesatie Legesse, MU-SSA

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to the global sports industry, with resource-constrained environments like Ethiopia experiencing profound management disruptions. This study investigates the impact of the pandemic on the management systems of 20 Ethiopian sports clubs across the disciplines of athletics, cycling, football, and handball. Employing the Koontz and O'Donnell (POSDC) management framework, a mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative surveys from 330 respondents—including board members, coaches, technicians, and athletes—with qualitative interviews and document analysis. The primary focus was to assess how core management functions—planning, staffing, organizing, directing, controlling, and training—were affected during the crisis and to identify factors contributing to organizational resilience.

Results reveal significant regional and sport-specific disparities. Clubs based in Addis Ababa demonstrated stronger management practices compared to those in Tigray, which faced ongoing conflict and infrastructural collapse. Quantitative analysis through non-parametric tests identified notable gaps in planning and staffing, exposing systemic vulnerabilities. The study underscores the importance of relational leadership, particularly the manager-coach relationship, which correlated positively with protocol adherence and service continuity. Indigenous innovation—low-tech solutions and social capital—proved crucial for adaptation, especially in resource-limited clubs.

The findings emphasize that organizational resilience in Ethiopian sports clubs largely depends on relational and human capital, with pre-existing management inequalities intensified by the pandemic. Recommendations include institutionalizing crisis management partnerships, developing decentralized capacity-building programs, adopting flexible control systems, and protecting human capital. This research contributes empirical insights into sport management and crisis resilience within a developing world context, highlighting adaptive leadership and indigenous social assets as vital for navigating future crises.

Keywords: COVID-19, Sport Management, Organizational Resilience, Ethiopia, Indigenous Innovation, Relational Leadership, Crisis Management, Resource-Constrained Sport Clubs.

Introduction

Planning is a fundamental management function that enables football clubs to establish clear goals, allocate resources efficiently, and achieve sustainable organizational development. Effective planning systems contribute to improved financial management, infrastructure development, player welfare, coaching quality, and overall club performance. In the Ethiopian Women's Premier League, clubs operate under different organizational and financial conditions, which may influence the effectiveness of their planning systems. Therefore, examining differences in club planning systems is essential for identifying strengths and weaknesses and for developing strategies to enhance the management and sustainable development of women's football in Ethiopia.

Statement of the Problem

Although effective planning is essential for the success and sustainability of football clubs, many Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs face challenges related to financial limitations, administrative capacity, infrastructure, and strategic management. These challenges may result in differences in planning systems among clubs. However, limited empirical research has examined these differences. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate whether significant differences exist in the planning systems of Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs and to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving club management and organizational effectiveness.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine the planning systems of Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs and determine whether significant differences exist among the clubs in their planning practices.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the current status of planning systems among Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs.
2. To compare the planning systems of the participating Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs.
3. To determine whether statistically significant differences exist in planning systems among the clubs.
4. To identify the pairwise differences in planning systems between Kolfea Keranyo and the other Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs

Research Questions

1. How do planning systems differ among Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs?
2. Are there significant differences in planning systems among the clubs?
3. How does Kolfea Keranyo's planning system compare with those of the other clubs?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design using a quantitative research approach. The descriptive design was considered appropriate because the study sought to examine the existing challenges and future perspectives of female football premier league clubs in Ethiopia. A quantitative approach was adopted to obtain measurable information regarding planning and organizing systems experienced by female football clubs. The study also explored stakeholders' perceptions regarding strategies for improving women's football in Ethiopia. The quantitative method facilitated objective analysis through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Study Area

The study was conducted among the clubs participating in the Ethiopian Women's Premier League during the competitive season. The Ethiopian Women's Premier League represents the highest level of women's football competition in the country and consists of clubs drawn from different regions of Ethiopia.

The participating clubs included:

- Kolfea Keranyo
- St. George
- Bank
- Welwalo
- Trans Ethiopia
- Bruh Tesfa
- 70 Enderta

Selection of Subjects

The target population consisted of all major stakeholders directly involved in the Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select club managers, coaches, and technical officials because of their extensive knowledge and experience regarding club management and development. Registered players were selected using simple random sampling to ensure that each eligible player had an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Only participants who had completed at least one competitive season with their respective clubs were included in the study to ensure adequate experience and familiarity with the operational challenges of women's football.

Selection of Variables and Instruments

Independent Variable

The independent variable was:

- Ethiopian Women's Premier League Clubs

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the planning and organizing system that affects women's football clubs,

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was submitted to experts in sports management, sports science, research methodology, and women's football development to establish content validity. Based on their recommendations, ambiguous and irrelevant items were revised before the final administration.

Data Collection Procedures

Before data collection, ethical approval and official permission were obtained from the relevant university research committee and the Ethiopian Football Federation. Permission was also obtained from the management of each participating club.

The researcher personally visited each club to explain the objectives and significance of the study to the participants. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that all responses would remain confidential and be used solely for academic purposes. After obtaining informed consent, questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents. Sufficient time was provided for completing the questionnaires, and the researcher remained available to clarify any questions regarding the survey items. The collected data were coded and entered into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29.0) for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses. Inferential statistical techniques such as the Kruskal–Wallis H test were employed to determine overall differences among clubs. Where significant differences were identified, Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons were conducted to identify the specific clubs that differed significantly. Statistical significance was established at the 0.05 level.

Results

Table 4.7: pairwise comparisons of club planning systems

Clubs Compared Two at a Time					
Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig. ^a
KolfeaKeranyo-70 Enderta	111.545	27.817	4.010	.000	.008
KolfeaKeranyo-Bank	114.659	29.312	3.912	.000	.012
KolfeaKeranyo-bruhtesfa	128.462	34.406	3.734	.000	.026
KolfeaKeranyo-Welwalo	134.772	31.103	4.333	.000	.002
KolfeaKeranyo-Trans	138.855	34.406	4.036	.000	.007
KolfeaKeranyo-St.george	140.962	31.103	4.532	.000	.001
Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.					
a. Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.					

Detailed Interpretation of Pairwise Comparisons Between Kolfea Keranyo and Other Clubs

The pairwise comparison table presents the results of multiple comparisons between Kolfea Keranyo and the other six clubs using a Bonferroni-adjusted post hoc test. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the distributions of the selected variable differ significantly between Kolfea Keranyo and each of the other clubs after controlling for the increased risk of Type I error associated with multiple comparisons. The null hypothesis for each

comparison states that there is no significant difference in the distribution of the measured variable between the two clubs. A Bonferroni-adjusted significance value (Adj. Sig.) of less than 0.05 indicates a statistically significant difference.

The comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and 70 Enderta produced a test statistic of 111.545, with a standard error of 27.817 and a standardized test statistic (Z) of 4.010. The Bonferroni-adjusted significance value was 0.008, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the distribution of the measured variable differs significantly between Kolfea Keranyo and 70 Enderta. This result suggests that the two clubs demonstrate statistically different performances or characteristics with respect to the variable under investigation.

Similarly, the comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and Bank revealed a test statistic of 114.659, a standard error of 29.312, and a standardized test statistic of 3.912. The adjusted significance value was 0.012, which is also below the 0.05 threshold. This finding indicates a statistically significant difference between Kolfea Keranyo and Bank. Hence, the distribution of the measured variable for these two clubs is not the same, suggesting that Bank differs significantly from Kolfea Keranyo.

The comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and Bruh Tesfa yielded a test statistic of 128.462, with a standard error of 34.406 and a standardized test statistic of 3.734. The Bonferroni-adjusted significance value was 0.026. Although this is the largest adjusted p-value among the comparisons, it remains below the significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a statistically significant difference between Kolfea Keranyo and Bruh Tesfa. This indicates that the observed difference between the two clubs is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and Welwalo resulted in a test statistic of 134.772, a standard error of 31.103, and a standardized test statistic of 4.333. The adjusted significance value was 0.002, providing very strong statistical evidence against the null hypothesis. Therefore, Kolfea Keranyo differs significantly from Welwalo with respect to the variable being analyzed. The very small adjusted p-value indicates a highly reliable difference between these two clubs.

Likewise, the comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and Trans produced a test statistic of 138.855, a standard error of 34.406, and a standardized test statistic of 4.036. The adjusted significance value was 0.007, which is considerably lower than the 0.05 criterion. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, demonstrating a statistically significant difference between Kolfea Keranyo and Trans. This finding further confirms that Kolfea Keranyo is distinguishable from Trans regarding the measured variable.

The final comparison between Kolfea Keranyo and St. George yielded a test statistic of 140.962, a standard error of 31.103, and the highest standardized test statistic of 4.532 among all comparisons. The Bonferroni-adjusted significance value was 0.001, representing the strongest statistical evidence of difference in the table. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that Kolfea Keranyo and St. George differ significantly in the distribution of the variable under investigation. This comparison demonstrates the greatest level of statistical separation between Kolfea Keranyo and any of the clubs included in the analysis.

Overall Interpretation

Overall, the Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons demonstrate that Kolfea Keranyo differs significantly from every other club included in the analysis. The adjusted significance values for all six comparisons (0.008, 0.012, 0.026, 0.002, 0.007, and 0.001) are below the predetermined significance level of 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in every case. These findings indicate that the distribution of the measured variable for Kolfea Keranyo is statistically different from those of 70 Enderta, Bank, Bruh Tesfa, Welwalo, Trans, and St. George.

Among the comparisons, the strongest evidence of a significant difference was observed between Kolfea Keranyo and St. George ($Z = 4.532$, Adjusted $p = .001$), followed by Kolfea Keranyo and Welwalo ($Z = 4.333$, Adjusted $p = .002$). Although the comparison with Bruh Tesfa showed the largest adjusted p-value (.026), it remained statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction. Collectively, these results suggest that Kolfea Keranyo exhibits a pattern that is significantly different from all the other clubs with respect to the variable measured.

Conclusion

The Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparison analysis provides clear evidence that Kolfea Keranyo differs significantly from all other clubs included in the study with respect to the variable under investigation. Since the adjusted significance values for comparisons with 70 Enderta ($p = .008$), Bank ($p = .012$), Bruh Tesfa ($p = .026$),

Welwalo ($p = .002$), Trans ($p = .007$), and St. George ($p = .001$) were all below the established significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no difference between the respective club distributions was rejected in every case.

These findings indicate that Kolfea Keranyo possesses a statistically distinct profile compared with the other Ethiopian Women's Premier League clubs. The strongest statistical evidence of difference was observed in the comparison with St. George, followed by Welwalo, while the comparison with Bruh Tesfa, although exhibiting the highest adjusted p -value, also remained statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction. Overall, the results demonstrate that the observed differences between Kolfea Keranyo and the remaining clubs are unlikely to have occurred by chance and instead reflect genuine differences in the measured variable.

From a broader perspective, the significant pairwise differences suggest that the clubs are not homogeneous in terms of the characteristic being assessed. These disparities may reflect variations in organizational practices, financial capacity, coaching quality, infrastructure, administrative support, player development programmes, or other club-specific factors that influence the measured outcome. Therefore, the findings underscore the need for club-specific interventions and strategic planning to reduce disparities and promote balanced development across the Ethiopian Women's Premier League.

It should be noted, however, that while the pairwise comparisons confirm the existence of statistically significant differences, they do not indicate the direction or magnitude of those differences. Consequently, the mean ranks or descriptive statistics should be considered alongside these results to determine which clubs performed relatively better or worse on the variable under investigation. Nevertheless, the Bonferroni-adjusted analysis conclusively establishes that Kolfea Keranyo is statistically different from each of the other clubs, providing strong support for the conclusion that meaningful inter-club differences exist within the league.

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