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Female basketball athlete development environment: proposed guidelines and success factors

Entorno para el desarrollo de atletas de baloncesto femenino: las directrices propuestas y los factores de éxito

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KEYWORDS

Sport
 Training
 Talent
 Sports club

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the guidelines and success factors of a sport club that contribute to the identification and development of female basketball athletes. The context investigated comprises a Brazilian club with strong tradition in the training of athletes and important sporting achievements in the sport. Data collection used interviews and documentary sources, which were analyzed using the technique of content analysis. The results showed the importance of administrative organization of sports institutions guided by solid training guidelines that support the club management actions and emphasize the importance of public-private partnerships to increase the federated sport, where sponsorship exchanges such as scholarships in private universities and government policies become crucial for maintaining athletes in adulthood. However, as municipal public institutions do not have as priority elite sport, the basketball club investigated has presented difficulties in keeping teams of higher and adult ages in the scenario to which they belong. In this sense, sports managers and coaches should establish clear guidelines for the strengthening of the organizational culture of the institution, since, with structural conditions and greater sense of belonging to the club, there are higher possibilities for maintenance of talents in the sports institution.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Deporte
 Formación
 Talentos
 Club deportivo

RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es analizar directrices y factores de éxito de un club deportivo, que contribuyen a la identificación y desarrollo de jugadoras de baloncesto femenino. Se investigó un club brasileño caracterizado por una tradición en la formación de atletas e importantes conquistas deportivas en dicha modalidad. Recogida de información: se utilizaron entrevistas y fuentes documentales; fueron analizadas mediante la técnica de análisis de contenidos. Los resultados muestran la importancia de la organización administrativa en instituciones deportivas, establecida mediante unas directrices sólidas de formación que respaldan las acciones de gestión del club, además de enfatizar en la importancia de las asociaciones público-privadas, donde diferentes sistemas de patrocinio, como becas de estudio de universidades privadas y/o de políticas gubernamentales, resultan fundamentales para la manutención de jugadores en edad adulta. Como las instituciones públicas municipales no tienen como prioridad el deporte de élite, el club presenta dificultades para mantener equipos cuyos jugadores comprenden edades más avanzadas. Se recomienda a gestores y entrenadores, establecer directrices claras para fortalecer la cultura organizativa de las instituciones; teniendo buenas condiciones estructurales y un mayor sentimiento de pertenencia al club, se consiguen mayores y mejores posibilidades de manutención y progresión de talentos en las instituciones deportivas.

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Introduction

The process of sports talent training is strongly linked to a long-term training program that when structured, planned and executed, will play a key role in the development of future generations of athletes (Böhme, 2007). In this case, the identification of sporting talents is linked to the phases of detection and sporting selection. While detection is based on recruitment campaigns and monitoring of competitions (Ferreira, Markunas & Nascimento, 2005), selection makes use of means for the determination of individuals having conditions to be selected in higher levels of long-term training (Böhme, 2007).

By enrolling in training programs, children and adolescents are considered athletes in development and experience a series of training procedures that lead them to a process of long-term sports training (Ferreira et al., 2005). The sporting talent development approach emphasizes the acquisition of motor and psychological skills, focusing on the quantity and quality of training required (technical, educational, scientific, technological and social measures) to achieve desirable performance (Henriksen, Stambulova & Roessler, 2010; Henriksen, Stambulova & Roessler, 2011).

The offer of organized sport can occur both in the public sector as in the private sector, in which the sports club play an essential role in promoting this phenomenon (Lopez & Fernandez, 2014). For this, if well organized, sports clubs can recruit, retain and engage more supporters (Jana, 2012), which makes emerging the need to adapt the services they offer, as the search for more effective competitive, profitable and attractive results becomes increasingly desired (Moreno, García & Pomar, 2012).

It is noteworthy that the quality and adequacy of the sporting context are the main factors that influence the sports career, since athletic development should occur continuously in favorable environments with favorable conditions and over a considerable period of time, becoming critical to the success of this process (Martindale, Collins & Daubney, 2005). Therefore, the need and relevance of the analysis of factors considered success facilitators provided by the sports club in terms of sports talent development is recognized.

The observation of the conditions provided by an environment, the daily routines and the results of processes occurred both in terms of sports and in terms of organization are key factors and should be understood as a starting point for investigations in this area (Henriksen et al. 2010). In addition, the study of the trajectory of sports clubs with longevity in the sports scene and the success of their sports programs will enable viewing convergent points that quantitatively and qualitatively contribute to the training and development of athletes, thus enabling the support for new proposals contributing to the development of sports (Antonelli, Galatti & Paes, 2012; Galatti, Paes, Machado & Seoane, 2015).

In this scenario, it appears that the sports training process of young athletes recurrently makes up the research agenda in Sports Science in Northern Hemisphere countries and Australia. However, little is known about this process in the Southern Hemisphere (Bruner, Erickson, Wilson & Côté, 2010). Thus, in order to contribute to reflections on the Brazilian context and seeking to extrapolate the contribution to the discussion about the training of athletes in the international context, this study aims to determine the guidelines and success factors of a sports club that contribute to the identification and development of female basketball players. It is noteworthy that to outline the data collection process and support the process of discussion of data, the look of the Bioecological Theory of Human Development was used (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Also, not to restrict the study to a bio-ecological assessment, the analysis was based on and discussion of data in the Sport Development Policies based on a pyramid model proposed by Green (2005) and on the Model of Environment Success Factors Proposed by Henriksen et al. (2010).

Method

Participants

The sporting context studied was a sports club training young people in the state of Santa Catarina (Brazil). The

process of choosing the institution was intentional according to the following characteristics presented by the entity: strong tradition in Santa Catarina women's basketball, with achievements in state, national and international level; historical contribution in the training of athletes members of basic state selections; rely on experienced coaches with calls on their resumes to direct state selections; effective management of the board of directors in administrative and bureaucratic issues.

The study included two managers, three coaches and 11 athletes and former athletes. The selection of board members and coaches took place through the following inclusion criteria: current president (appointed by the board of directors and coaches for providing updated information on actions, guidelines and club purposes); former sports director (appointed by the board and coaches due to their contribution to the beginning of basketball in the city and the Basketball Club foundation process); coaches (all coaches working in competitive teams and the sports initiation schools).

The initial analysis of documentary sources provided by the institution identified three generations of athletes who won state titles: 1st generation (1994-1996); 2nd generation (1999-2003); 3rd generation (2006-2011). In this sense, the selection of athletes and former athletes who have contributed to historical information about the guidelines and the success factors of the Basketball Club followed this characterization and the following inclusion criteria: athletes who left the club to work in other teams and remain acting professionally in the adult team; athletes who left to work in other teams and returned to the club; athletes who left the sport in the youth category; athletes who remain in the club from the youth category to the adult team. The use of only one athlete in each inclusion criterion is due to the fact that in the first generations, only one athlete was found (or none as the case of athlete transferred from the 1st generation) with the desired characteristics to contribute to the study, thus opting to the same number of athletes in each criterion. In this case, when more than one athlete with selected characteristics was found, coaches were requested to indicate one, which according to them, had been highly visible in her generation (considered by them as a sporting talent).

Instruments

Information was collected from the survey of documentary sources and semi-structured interviews with participants. The documents used were provided by the Basketball Club Secretary, coaches and the Santa Catarina Basketball Federation (FCB): official club website and FCB, shipped and received correspondence, projects for sponsorship request, official transfer notes and withholding letters of athletes, board, coaches and FCB reports, FCB official notes, newspaper reports. These documents helped in gathering information on titles won, athletes called for state and / or national teams awarded as top scorer in competitions, proposed guidelines, sponsorships, basketball schools, youth and adult teams.

The interview with athletes addressed the following themes: process of transfer to other clubs (transfer reasons, guidelines and actions proposed by the club); process of abandonment (sport abandonment reasons, guidelines and actions proposed by the club); process of remaining in the sports and in the club (reasons to remain in the club and sports); process of returning to the club (reasons for returning to the club, guidelines and actions proposed by the club). In turn, interviews with coaches were based on the following themes: initiation schools and competitive teams (age that children start in basketball practice and competitive teams, number of initiation schools and competitive teams, weekly and daily frequency of initiation schools and competitive teams); sponsorship and support (receiving public and private funding, difficulties found and strategies used to obtain collaborators, aid from parents in expenses and club activities, adjustment of budget to Club activities); established guidelines for recruitment, retention and advancement in sport (selection process of children and young people to join in initiation schools and competitive teams, providing scholarships, financial assistance, food, transportation, housing); transfer of athletes and / or sport abandonment (abandonment reasons, transfers and return of athletes).

Procedures

Data collection started through the survey of documentary sources. Later, to complement information obtained in official documents, interviews were held with managers, coaches (around 90 minutes), athletes and former athletes (around 45 minutes), in location (home of employees, office work, sports department, gym) and previously scheduled time. All interviews were conducted by the same investigator, being carried out individually, recorded, transcribed in full and sent to respondents as content validation process.

The investigation was approved by the Ethics Committee on Human Research of the Federal University of Santa Catarina under protocol No. 1170/2010. The participation of subjects was made possible after the signing of the Informed Consent Form (athletes, former athletes, parents or guardians, coaches, managers).

Data analysis

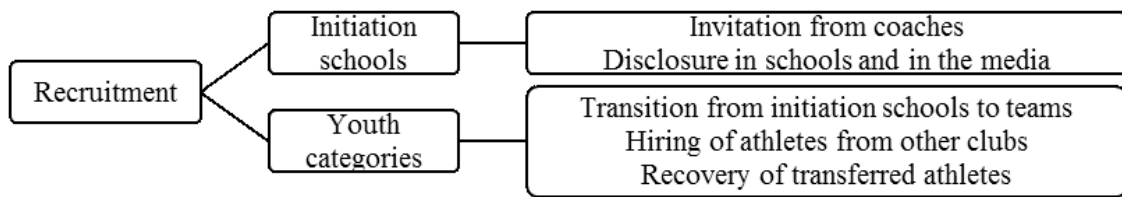
The information obtained from documentary sources and interviews were assessed by the categorical content analysis technique (Bardin, 2011) using the QSR NVivo software, version 9.2, whose categories were developed *a priori* from theoretical frameworks: proposed guidelines (Green, 2005) – recruitment of athletes (invitation, disclosure, hiring, return), retention of athletes (permanence reasons, dropout, transfer and return, proposals and actions taken); environmental success factors (Henriksen et al., 2010) - preconditions (financial, material, human), process (meetings, social events, training, competitions), results (development and individual achievements, group achievements, organizational culture).

Results

Guidelines for recruitment, retention and advancement of athletes

The guideline initially established by the Basketball Club under study for the process of identification and sports development is to achieve a significant number of practitioners without detection or selection *a priori* to then select those who demonstrate during their formative process, the desired skills for continuity in the sporting process. To achieve this goal, the recruitment of children and adolescents to join initiation schools is done by invitation, dissemination in basic education schools, in leaflets and in the media, via Municipal Sports Foundation (FME). The report of coach A expressed the forms of recruiting athletes: "We are going to schools to inform the schedules and places nearby that have basketball schools. [...] and the public agency, the Department of Sports, is responsible for making leaflets informing the existence of schools for such sports using the media, the newspaper".

The guidelines also revealed that the club has been, for many years, exclusively dedicated to the 'training' of female basketball players in its training schools, taking part in competitions in the youth category without due concern for the retention and subsequent advancement in the sports career (transition to adult category). In addition, there was lack of funds for hiring athletes from other clubs. In this case, only from 2009 after changes in the board of directors (most members remained in the board from 1992 to 2008), the initiative of hiring players from other institutions and the rescue of athletes transferred to other sports entities was established (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Process of athlete recruitment.

The information obtained also showed the absence of a policy for the detection and permanence of talents and prospects, and their proper use in higher categories. In this case, it also showed the large number of young people who dropout from sports practice or transferred to other clubs when they were in the development categories. Thus, some athletes did not even reach maturity in the sport and the club did not actually make use of talents in adult category competitions, i.e., there was no concern with the advancement of athletes to higher competitive levels.

In the documents and testimonies of the interviewees, it was clear that the guidelines were being modified and the club has always been seen only as a reference in the 'training of athletes' and that could not, for financial reasons, keep their players, and started having as goal to keep them in its teams (retention), so as to invest in high-performance team and have a representative adult team. However, putting into practice these new proposals was only possible with the increase of public and private financial resources, especially the agreement with private university. The President's testimony illustrates that:

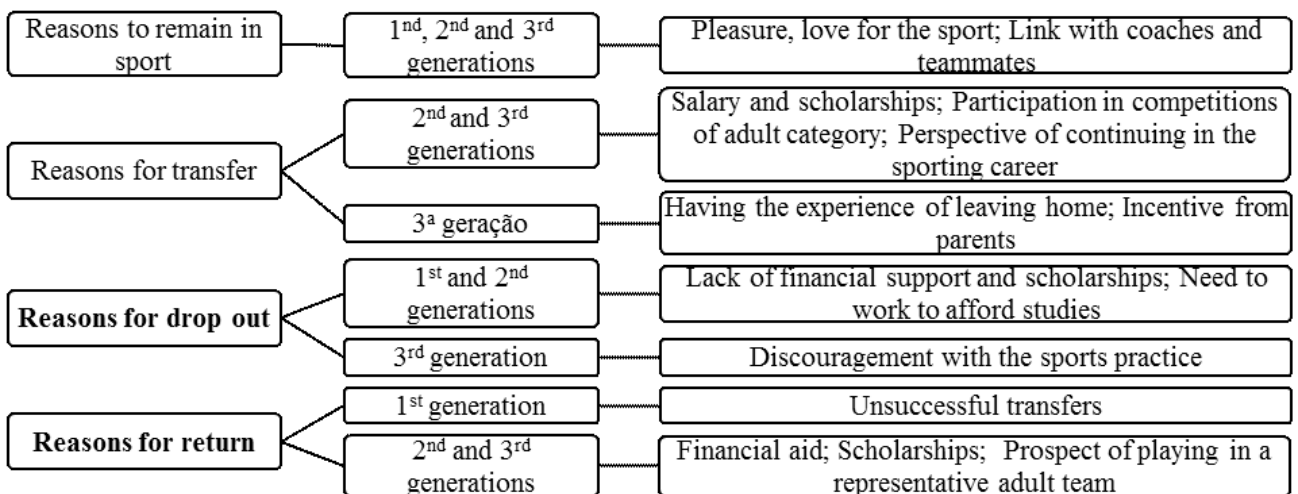
"The situation has been reversed in recent years, up to 17 years, we had only good youth categories, then we had no expectations, then going out was to keep the dream of continuing playing. Therefore, the process now is to keep athletes, to retain professionals we have here in our city, [...] through the support from the university, the sponsors" (President's testimony).

Although the club have changed its policies regarding the transfer of athletes to other institutions, the retention guidelines established by the new board were not enough to stimulate and develop a policy for the permanence of athletes who leave early the sports. This worrying fact shows the small number of athletes in some competitive categories, insufficient to maintain the category corresponding to their age, being forced to seek reinforcement in the lower categories to complete the team. According to Coach B:

"You start with a base, extremely wide, but it goes narrowing, it is a triangle [...] this is a normal process because our sport is not the most popular in Brazil. Let's say that because our city is not a great urban center, one cannot find hundreds of athletes. You start a mini class with 30 children and reach the youth category with very few girls; the others are still in the child's category" (Coach B).

Testimonies reveal that in the first generations, the lack of Club proposals (financial aid and scholarship) was decisive for most dropouts and transfers. Those involved justify that this lack of proposals occurred due to the lack of financial resources of the club and difficulties to obtain agreements and partnerships with universities in providing scholarships. In turn, for coaches and first-generation athletes, the return of most of them was due to different reasons unrelated to the actions and guidelines proposed by the Club, given that the majority has returned due to unsuccessful transfers. However, athletes of the 2nd and 3rd generations reported that the financial assistance, university scholarship and the prospect of playing in a representative adult team strengthened this return movement (Figure 2).

Figure 2 - Process of retention and advancement of athletes.



Environmental success factors in the development of athletes

The Basketball Club under study has private support, public agreement and the monthly fee of its members as a source of subsidies. The coaches reported that the club used to run promotions (raffles and dinner) for fundraising. However, they regret that these activities are no longer developed because the current financial resources, despite significant improvements in recent years, are still insufficient and inadequate for the full development of the work. With regard to partners and supporters of the private sector, the club has five collaborating companies, as well as agreements with a physiotherapy clinic, a bodybuilding gym and a university. According to the Club's President "We do not have a great sponsor in the private sector to provide us funds, we rather have small aids from entrepreneurs who collaborate by sympathizing with the sports modality [...]". While recognizing the importance of the signed agreements, which ensure the provision of scholarships for higher -education athletes, concern over the loss of agreements with private schools, existing from 1994 to 2010 and fundamental for the athletes of the youth teams was not recorded in the speeches of coaches and officials, and they also did not mention the reestablishment of proposals of such agreements, which would ensure the necessary incentive to athletes (base of the sporting pyramid), elementary school students.

Public support, arising from the agreement signed with FME, is considered the most significant, which emphasizes the importance of the policy adopted by the municipal administration, which gives the clubs an 'additional by merit', according to the results achieved when representing the city in official competitions sponsored by the Santa Catarina Sport Foundation (FESPORTE). According to the President, "[...] according to the results achieved, the financial support increases or reduces [...]" In recent years, we have had an increase of 35% due to titles won [...] 1st, 2nd and 3rd place have an increase in benefits and depending on other results a fall". The board also informed that the Club has adopted the strategy of forwarding projects to government programs, such as the Sports Incentive Fund (FUNDESPORTE), in an attempt to raise awareness among local entrepreneurs. However, Basketball Club coaches perceive as of fundamental importance the consolidation of an adult team and marketing, by a public agency for clarification on sports sponsorship by the business community of the city, while minimizing the negative effects of the lack of national basketball idols in the media.

The club expenses are composed of food, housing, transportation, registration, arbitration fees and financial aid to talents and those that the management realizes that have needs. In addition to these aids, which resources come from the club's budget and scholarships, three athletes receive the *Programa Bolsa Atleta* aid from the federal government. In terms of material resources, the Club's infrastructure consists of an office and places for training and competitions assigned by FME, in addition to a bodybuilding gym.

Human resources comprise hired athletes and those trained in sports initiation schools in the club, which are

recorded in FCB and in the West Basketball League of Santa Catarina (LOCAB). It is noteworthy that the board members develop their activities voluntarily (family), providing extra-block support for coaches in preparing projects for fundraising and the administration and management activities. Coaches are hired by FME, two of them effective in the Municipal Department of Education and assigned to the sport on a temporary basis to work in the institution. In addition, FME provides, if necessary, physiotherapist, massage therapist, and psychologist. The results obtained in relation to the financial, human and material conditions of the Basketball Club (Figure 3) demonstrate the importance of sponsors and supporters for the survival and growth of the institution.

Figure 3 - Summary of pre-conditions presented by the Basketball Club.

F		M		H
N	- Insufficient resources	A		U
A	- FME	T	- Assigned gym and office - FME	M
N	- Schools and private universities	E	- Bodybuilding gym	A
C	- Collaborating companies	R		N
I		I		
A		A		
L		L		

The process occurred in an environment of athlete development corresponds to the activities developed in it. In the specific case of the investigated Basketball Club, the following activities could be observed: meetings, social events, training, competitions. Meetings, in more formal character, are held with athletes' parents to report on the club's activities and management, while meetings with club members are held to verify deliberations, elections, accountability, among other procedures.

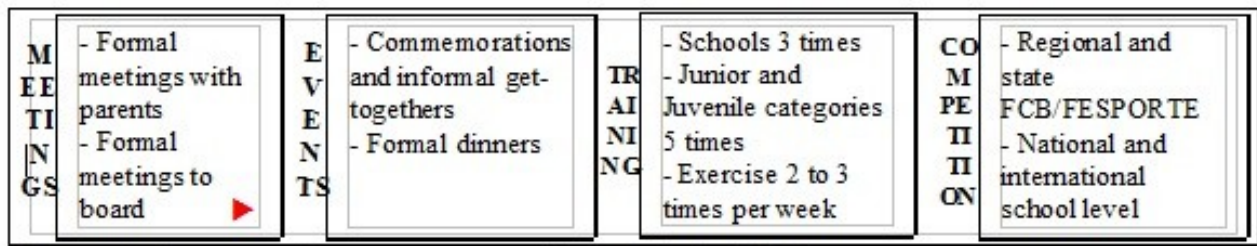
Most social events are informal meetings among athletes, officials, coaches and family members to celebrate achievements or socialization among them. Formal dinners at the beginning and/or end of the year are promoted by the institution for which representatives of public, private sectors and local media are also invited.

Athletes from initiation schools and mini team (under-12) attend training sessions three times a week in the morning or evening periods (school counter shift). Junior (under-13), children (under-14) and juvenile categories (under-16) have technical and tactical training from Monday to Friday in the afternoon and physical preparation involving aerobic preparation (races) twice a week, and anaerobic preparation (weight lifting) also twice a week. Youth (under-18) and adult teams perform technical and tactical sessions training from Monday to Friday in the evening and physical preparation, involving anaerobic preparation (weight training) three times a week. Aerobic preparation is predominantly performed twice a week in technical and tactical training sessions.

With regard to competition, the Basketball Club usually participates in regional and state championships. In recent years, it has also participated in national and international events. At the regional and state levels, teams compete for mini, junior, children and juvenile categories (LOCAB, FCB), as well as in the Student Olympics of Santa Catarina (OLESC), and little Open games and Open Games (FESPORTE), representing FME. Teams also participate in the statewide School Games of Santa Catarina (JESC) for ages 12-14 years and 15-17 years for representation of supporting schools.

Until 2010, athletes competed for private schools that provided scholarships. From 2011, with the end of agreements, they have to compete for public school to which most athletes moved in order to participate together in the competition. In addition, they competed for the University Games of Santa Catarina (JUCs) by the sponsoring university. In national and international level, the team has played school level competitions and some athletes participated in national championships selections, representing the state of Santa Catarina. A summary of activities (process) in the environment of women's basketball talent development can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Summary of the process occurred in the Basketball Club.



The results of this process occurred in the analyzed environment reflect the development and individual achievements of athletes, the group achievements and organizational culture of the Basketball Club. In this context, it was observed that coaches and managers are proud to be able to develop certain psychological and psychosocial skills in their athletes, such as personal responsibility, commitment to the sport and study, as well as good interpersonal relations between them and the other entity's agents. These skills are also recognized and valued by athletes, according to the following lines:

"I think it's not the winning above all else. There are multiple values [...]. The goal has always been the same, through sport, to grow correct people [...] 99% are correct girls, scholars who know what they want from the future and have many good values. Thanks to basketball, these values were also valued, thanks also to the sport, not only the family environment "(Coach B); "Wonderful, those were the best years of my life in basketball, because even though you do not gain anything financially, you played for love [...] in other cities, it is different [...] one wanting to hit, to win the space of another. The feeling was different; if I could go back I would had never left this club" (1st generation return athlete).

The individual sporting success of athletes formed in the Basketball Club is reflected in winning titles 'top scorer' (top scorer of the competition) and highlight in regional, state and national competitions, as well as call for state selections and pre-calls for national teams of basic categories. Historical records reveal that thirteen athletes have been top scorers of state competitions, organized by FCB, four of which have won the title more than once, two were top scorers of regional championship and one in a national competition. In addition, two athletes were considered prominent in regional championships and two in national events.

The club also stood out in the training of athletes called to state selections. The official records indicate that thirty-one subjects were selected, seventeen of them more than once. Regarding the national team, the club has had seven pre-called athletes; however, none was among the twelve who were to competitions representing the country. For coaches and athletes, the call to play for Brazilian selections is desired by most players, who expect this moment with a lot of anxiety. However, although the pre-call for Brazilian team is seen as a very special moment for athletes, coaches lament the difficulty of a Santa Catarina athlete to be included among the twelve selected. The following statements express these feelings:

"It was very exciting, especially in the national team. I never expected to be called, because I never had contact with anyone from there. It was very important to me, really exciting "(3rd generation return athlete); "[...] We know that our geographical and political reality sometimes prevents us to be in the national team. Sometimes it does not only depend on the athlete, there is much political issue involved and other factors that are not worth mentioning. So, we get very happy when a girl is in a Santa Catarina selection or when her dream is to be remembered for the national team. We know that a girl from Santa Catarina to be among the twelve in a Brazilian team is very difficult due to these and other factors, but I think to be remembered is a great deal" (Coach B).

With respect to group achievements, the study revealed that the Basketball Club has twenty three state titles on basic competitions organized by FCB and ten state titles in events sponsored by FESPORTE. The Club also won two national titles and two international titles in school competitions, representing the sponsoring schools. Tables

1 and 2 illustrate the success trajectory of the Club's basic category teams in competitions organized by FCB.

Table 1 - Participation and achievements in state competitions sponsored by FCB.

	Mini	Junior	Pre-children	Children	Juvenile	Youth	Sub19	Total
Champion	02	08	00	06	05	01	01	23
Vice-champion	00	01	01	03	02	00	00	07
3 rd place	00	02	00	01	02	01	00	06
Total medals	02	11	01	10	09	02	01	36
Participation	02	13	01	12	16	04	01	49

Table 2 reinforces the strong tradition of basic category teams of the Club in competitions held in the state of Santa Catarina, with an average of 73% of wins in games played, especially in Mini, Junior and children categories. It was observed, however, a decrease from the children's category in which the club used to lose athletes to other state institutions.

Table 2 - Percentage of victories in state competitions sponsored by FCB.

Category	Participation	No. games	Victories	Defeats	% Victories
Mini	02	15	13	02	87%
Junior	13	150	126	24	84%
Pre-children	01	03	02	01	67%
Children	12	152	109	43	72%
Juvenile	16	207	142	65	69%
Youth	04	40	23	17	58%
FCB Under-19 Cup	01	03	03	00	100%
Total	48	567	415	152	73%

The organizational culture of an institution is reflected in cultural artifacts, values and basic assumptions adopted. In terms of cultural artifacts, the pride for the club was recognized as 'storehouse of athletes', responsible for the development of talents, called 'homegrown stars'. This perception is reflected even in reports of athletes who have moved to other places, but that did not fail to recognize the importance of the context where they were formed:

"[...] the club taught me to play basketball, which teaches children the passion for physical activity and fall in love with the sport. The people who are behind it, coaches, officials, parents, are there because they make it because they love it, with great dedication. So [...], it is now one of the cities that has the best basic team of the state" (2nd generation transfer athlete).

Many stories about the emotion felt at the time of calls for state teams, and the lived experience in playing national championships, are told and passed from generation to generation. These stories end up by being reflected in a great goal for younger athletes who seek to achieve what their colleagues have achieved. The more experienced athletes are therefore seen as 'mirrors' for beginners. In terms of physical and cultural events (clothes, utensils and charts), it is observed that the club searches, through the prints in game and training uniforms, by placing banners in training and competition sites, and especially through newspaper reports, disclose the trademarks of its sponsors and the own entity.

The main values assumed by the club members are the formation of citizens, valuing ethical behavior of athletes trained in its schools and teams, community, unity, fellowship and especially the formation of a family, according to the following narratives:

"Factors that we always work: human values, citizenship. Our approach has always been to work these issues with the children, 'you are an athlete, but you have to think about the future, have maturity "(Former athletic director); "[...] We are a very united group, a family. I think that as I have them as a family, they have me almost like a second mother and is a very good question that we have union that I believe we made the team work out "(Coach B).

In turn, the club shows as an initial assumption highlighted in its guidelines, the interest in recruiting large numbers of children and young people to form their talents, instead of performing tests and observations to detect and select athletes *a priori*. Nowadays, however, it has sought to keep its players in its teams, invest in high-performance athletes (adult category). Figure 5 illustrates the results (individual, group, cultural) achieved by the Basketball Club in the process of training its athletes.

Figure 5 - Summary of the results achieved by the Basketball Club.

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS	- Psychological and psychosocial skills: commitment, responsibility, union - Top scorers and highlights in competitions - Calls for state selections and pre-calls for national teams	GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS	- Commemorations and informal get-togethers - State titles of all - FCB/FESPORTE basic categories - National and international titles at school level	ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	- Cultural Artifacts: training of talented athletes - Values: ethical behavior, community, union, family - Assumptions: recruiting large numbers of athletes, investing in high-performance athletes
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Discussion

Process of identifying and developing athletes: the influence of guidelines and success factors

In the Bioecological Theory of Human Development, 'proximal processes' operate as engines of development and are differentiated in terms of two types of development results that produce competence and dysfunction. 'Competence' (positive-active) is marked by the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and abilities in intellectual, environmental, motivational and artistic fields, while 'dysfunction' (negative-passive) refers to the recurrent manifestation of signs of difficulties to maintain control and integration of behavior in situations that have occurred in different areas of development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The information obtained about the guidelines and success factors, present throughout the history of the investigated 'microsystem' (the innermost level of the ecological system characterized as the environment in which the developing person actively participates - Bronfenbrenner, 1996), revealed the occurrence in the first generations studied of a 'competence process' in the recruitment and training of athletes and a 'dysfunction process' in the retention and advancement of these players during their sports careers. However, the changes listed in the guidelines and the increase of public and private support in recent years showed an improvement in the prospects of continuing the athletic career (retention and advancement), for the current generation, within their own teams of the Club.

In the national panorama and more effectively, that is, beyond the training of athletes and achievements, only in the state panorama, the history and success trajectory of the Divino Salvador Club (São Paulo) revealed that it has emerged as one of the most effective sports programs of women's basketball in Brazil, revealing athletes and

coaches, constantly called to the Brazilian national team, and winning numerous state and national titles, both in the youth and in the adult category (Antonelli et al., 2012). However, regardless of the sport performance level (state or national), the participation in activities in sports clubs by children and adolescents is essential to their development, as they begin to engage more effectively with sport, as they are in direct partnership with their peers (Golle, Granacher, Hoffman, Wick & Muehlbauer, 2014).

In the first generations of athletes, the 'dysfunction process', in the retention and advancement of athletes by the Basketball Club led athletes to show 'disruptive provisions' around the sports practice in order to help with household expenses and in their studies. It is noteworthy that the 'disruptive provisions' are called by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) as the 'attributes of the person' (product and production of development) regarding the characteristics and behavioral provisions that hinder or even prevent the development of training processes in the environment in which they are, in this case, the sports environment. In this scenario, it appears that the situations considered negative by developing athletes can contribute to a change in behavior with psychological 'disruptive' extensions capable of generating high rates of dropouts, thus compromising the success of the sports training process (Massa, Uezu & Böhme, 2010).

However, the change in perspective has generated significant provisions among basketball players in the analyzed environment, given the 'generating provisions' (interest and motivation to remain in the sport and the club teams and advance to higher competitive levels), unlike 'disruptive', are highlighted as active guidelines, as trends to initiate and engage in activities, pursuing better long-term goals (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

In Brazil, Meira, Bastos & Böhme (2015, p. 583) also found that the organization and administration of sports actions and policies for the development of sport (swimming) occur within the clubs and municipal entities, autonomously and individually. Thus, each club becomes "responsible for defining its guidelines, application of financial resources, accounting, audit and relationship with sponsors". With regard to the guidelines established for the process of sports training, a change in the proposals and actions undertaken by the investigated Basketball Club during its 'historical time', especially recruitment and retention of athletes was observed. In turn, it was observed that the strategy maintained by coaches and managers over the years is configured from the concerns addressed in policies for the training of sports talents, one of which is to increase the rate of participation in sport and the other to overcome competitive standards achieved by athletes. In the first case, the initial goal is to recruit children and adolescents for sports, in the second, to develop part of recruited athletes as top athletes (Green, 2005).

The design observed in the guidelines proposed by the club resembles the analogy of sports pyramid, which provides that the peak of the pyramid, corresponding to high performance, is supported by a broad base of initial participation, i.e., the basis is consistent with the mass participation in the sport, the intermediate part refers to competitive sport and the top shows the high-performance sports (Green, 2005). In this case, most sports activities emphasize the application of three principles that compose a sports program: training - socio-educational project; maintenance - basic categories; and sports broadcasting - sport as a primary vehicle for adult team (Ferreira et al., 2005). However, it is emphasized that, despite the new guidelines and established actions, the club still failed to establish, as the top of the pyramid, a high-level representative adult team, which is its main guideline in the present moment.

Thus, the 'historical time' and from 'competence processes' demonstrated by basic teams (achievements of major titles), the club managed to expand its ties with 'exosystems' (one or more environments that do not involve the developing individuals as active participants, but in which events that affect their development occur - Bronfenbrenner, 1996), sponsors and FME, with new career opportunities for the next generation of athletes. In this perspective, understanding that the sports world presents increasing challenges to athletes, the financial structuring of sports organizations is emerging and critical, stressing that sponsorships have remarkable importance in sports promotion, being essential for maintaining competitive and representative teams (Galatti, 2010). In addition, the importance of long-term results in the development of new generations of athletes in the athletic development environment is emphasized, since the 'macro-time' (historical time) focuses on the

expectations and changing events within the society, both within and through the generations, influencing and being influenced by processes and results of the human development. In this case, the 'macro-time' covers from the past and the history experienced by each developing person up to his expectations about the future (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

The Model of Environmental Success Factors used in this research suggest that the success of a context in the development of sporting talents (effectiveness in producing athletes) is the result of the interaction between the conditions offered and the development process. This model takes as its starting point the conditions provided by the context, illustrating that the daily routines (process) can trigger three results: development and individual achievements of athletes; group achievements; organizational culture. In this model, the pre-conditions include human, material and financial resources, which are necessary for the process of talent development, but that by itself does not guarantee success (Henriksen et al., 2010).

In this case, the study revealed that scholarships in higher education are characterized as responsible for changing the retention reality and the advancement of basketball athletes in their sports careers. In turn, the relevance of FME, both in financial and material assistance as in the availability of human resources, reveals the dependence of the club on this 'exosystem' for the development of its activities. State basketball teams of Minas Gerais (Brazil) are constantly struggling to be able to provide scholarships, salary or financial assistance to athletes. With respect to material resources, clubs of Minas Gerais have difficulties in physical space for basketball practice, since this sport shares the schedules of sports courts with other sports played in the same institutions (Reis, Moraes, Ferreira, Noce & Costa, 2014).

Information from the *Programa Bolsa Atleta* emphasizes the importance of 'macro-system' (most remote level of the system, which constitutes the link of the existing features in a culture, subculture or another extension of the social structure) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), the federal government and public policies for the Brazilian sports sector and highlight the fact that the absence of national idols in the sport (sports culture) interferes in attracting new supporters. A research conducted with Track and Field talents of the state of Paraná (Brazil) also found the importance of financial and educational assistance for the development of athletes, as well as the assistance of state and local governments for sports promotion and maintenance (Vieira & Vieira, 2000). Thus, it appears that the federated sport effectively has become one of the main dependent on government financial at the national level, and the main programs with federal investments in the Brazilian scenario are: *Time Mania*, *Programa Bolsa Atleta* and the Law of Sports Incentive (Galatti, 2010). Therefore, Reis et al. (2014) confirm that it is fundamental an increased quantity and quality of resources offered so that training athletes have the opportunity to become professional basketball players, thus requiring greater support from government institutions and better organization of sports clubs.

In the specific case of *Programa Bolsa Atleta*, the allocation of monthly amounts in cash is expected for athletes selected by federations and confederations, indirectly benefiting some institutions, because they are no longer the only ones to assume responsibility for the salaries of their players (Galatti, 2010). Thus, "[...] the talent (person) in the different vital periods (time), suffers effect of decisions taken at the level of state and federal governments (context)" (Vieira, Vieira & Krebs, 2012, p. 59), and it is shown that the sports modalities lie heavily dependent on the 'macro-system'.

In Models of Environmental Success Factors, the process refers to activities developed in a particular context (Henriksen et al., 2010). In this case, the activities developed (process) in the development environment of female basketball athletes investigated show that training and competitions intensify significantly in terms of temporal persistence with the advancement of athletes in their sports training processes (levels of development). This increased workload and the amount of training days in the week, when the child begins a more specific training aiming to participate in federated competitions, was also observed in programs of initiating and sports specialization of São Paulo (Arena & Böhme, 2000).

The results of the process occurred in the analyzed environment correspond to development and individual

achievements, group achievements and organizational culture. Development and individual achievements relate to the acquisition of psychosocial skills and sports skills, as well as how these combine for the sporting success, while group achievements are characterized as the sporting success of a team. In turn, the organizational culture is central to the Model of Environmental Success Factors, consisting in three levels: cultural artifacts, values adopted, and basic assumptions (Henriksen et al., 2010).

In the scenario of organizational culture, Rocco Junior (2014, p. 14) points out that in Europe, where sports administration is more advanced compared to the Brazilian reality, it appears that "the construction and development of the organization culture of sports clubs begins with the management of their basic categories. This statement can be proven by the critical success factors for the management of the basic categories of major European clubs".

Regarding the results of the process of development of basketball athletes, it points out that the main individual achievements are summarized as the development of psychological and psychosocial skills, as well as awards as top scorers and highlights, in addition to calls for state teams, while group achievements include all competitions sponsored by leading sports federations in the state of Santa Catarina. Such group achievements revolve around both the Club representation as its supporters. Vila et al. (2015) point out the clear need to promote specific programs to promote general values in the training of young players aimed at improving the quality of the integral development process of these future athletes. However, Santos & Gonçalves (2015) point out that most clubs have flaws in the evaluation process of the implementation of their programs regarding the development of future talents, since they focus this assessment primarily on results obtained in basic categories.

Finally, the results of the organizational culture highlighted the pride they feel for being considered 'storehouse of athletes' and recently investments in 'high-performance athletes', in being able to disclose the brand of their supporters and valuing the constitution of a family. In research conducted with high-level Danish sailing athletes, as well as in the present study, considering the culture and level differences in which athletes are, it was found in terms of cultural artifacts, that many stories are told among athletes mainly by elite athletes, especially experiences around the world, humorous incidents, lessons learned, difficulties found and mutual support. In addition, it was found that the uniforms of sponsoring entities were always worn by elite athletes (Henriksen et al., 2010).

Similar to results found in this study, the values adopted by Danish sailing athletes were connected to working together, given that they help each other and have fun, while are aimed at high-performance sports (Henriksen et al., 2010). Similarly, the values identified in research with Norwegian kayak athletes refer to the importance of an inclusive community for all young people, although the context constantly highlights the best and the worst results among them (Henriksen et al., 2011).

In this scenario, the authors understand that the implementation and development of an organizational culture, regardless of the sporting culture of a country and the competitive level of athletes, allow the strengthening of individual identities of each sports club, adding values and assumptions to be adopted by all its agents (athletes, spectators, sponsors, coaches). Thus, the consolidation of "organizational values and principles that balance economic, market and financial results, with sports performance, contribute to the development and implementation of a culture that generates revenue and brings achievements in the sports field" (Rocco Junior, 2014, p. 12).

The information obtained in this investigation, despite the limitations found in the development of the study, such as the inability to increase the number of participants due to the desired characteristics and the time allocated for the interviews and their transcriptions, suggest the expansion of studies of this nature, which lack in South American countries and in the African continent. Investigations aimed at a better understanding of the guidelines and success factors of sporting environments including both those who reach it as those who have difficulty in establishing themselves in the sports scene of basic categories should be carried out for better understanding and improvement of administrative and sport organization of Brazilian sports institutions, especially when it comes to

the process of training of young basketball players in the national reality.

Conclusion

This study showed the importance of administrative organization of sports institutions based on guidelines and solid training actions that support the management actions in the club environment. It also emphasizes the importance of public-private partnerships to increase the federated sports, where sponsorship exchanges such as scholarships in private universities become crucial in maintaining athletes in adulthood, as well as scholarships from the federal government to help reduce expenses with the payment of salaries by clubs and the use of municipal facilities for training and competitions reduces concerns with investment in construction and maintenance of these spaces. However, as municipal public institutions do not have elite sport as priority, sports clubs are not able to maintain teams of higher and adult ages.

In parallel to the managerial aspects, it is recommended to managers and athletic trainers to establish in their clubs clear guidelines for the strengthening of the organizational culture of the institution. Thus, with structural conditions and greater sense of belonging to the club, the possibilities of maintenance of sports talent in a sporting institution seem to be higher.

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